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JULY

WINGS OVER GIBRALTAR

A NOVELETTE OF NORTH AFRICA TODAY

by GEORGES SURDEZ

L. L. FOREMAN

WINSTON NORMAN

LESLIE T. WHITE

ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON

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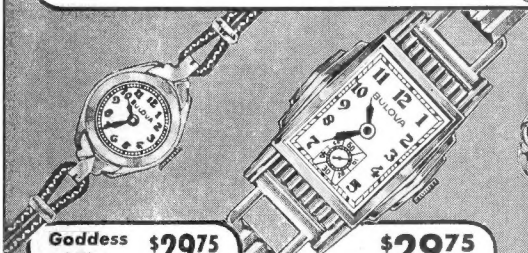

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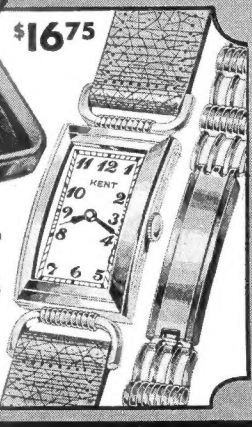

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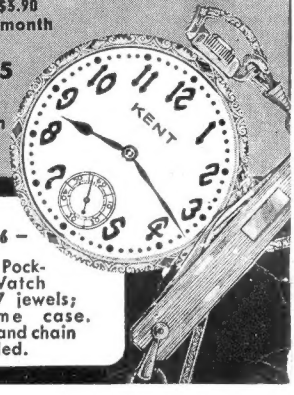

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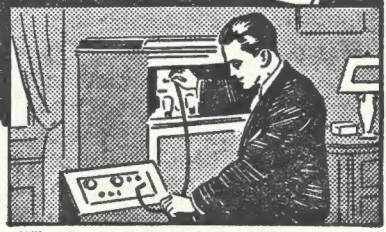

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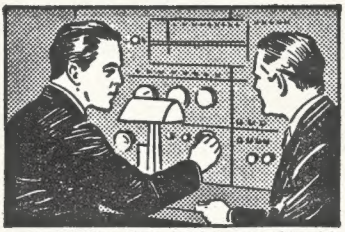

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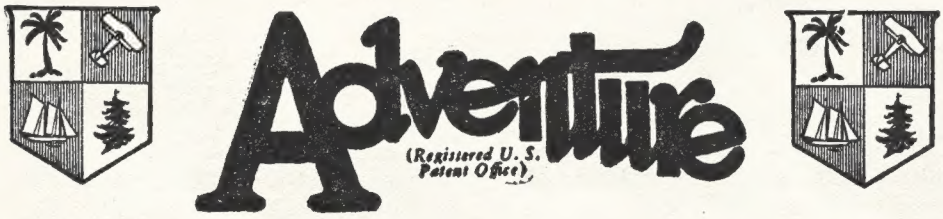

Vol. 105, No. 3 for July, 1941 Best of New Stories

Wings Over Gibraltar (a novelette) . . . . . GEORGES SURDEZ 10
The French were bombing "The Rock!" Over it roared the squadrons from Morocco, unloading their deadly freight. But to Lieutenant Brocart, manning one of the bombers' machine-guns, Gib was no military objective but the gateway to a free world—a gateway through which he might escape from a peace that was more dangerous than any war.

Over the Bank (an off-the-trail story) . . . . . FREDERICK WHITE 52
Brains overcome brawn on the Bearkill and John Morland, who found himself there for a quiet session of trout fishing, learns from a man called Ug a stunning fact far beyond his own limited twentieth century cosmos.

The Courtship of Pie-Biter Smith . . . . . WINSTON NORMAN 60
In the desert boom town of Argentite, where water cost more than whiskey, they took their ladies straight—till Lily came to town, complete with bathtub. From then on it was one continuous marathon to see which of her suitors could git there fustest with the mostest gallons.

Shotgun Island . . . . . ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON 63
It was a perfect frame Gannon had put young Conroy in, there on Vita-Mauna, with a double charge of theft plus murder staring him in the face. Even the Suva Police couldn't spot the flaw in it—till the fall-guy himself showed how easy it is for both clocks and calendars to lie in the South Seas.

Riddle for a Red Man . . . . . L. L. FOREMAN 77
The old warrior, Bad Arrow, had always wondered why the brave paleface shot himself instead of one more Indian at the Little Big Horn. Perhaps, he hoped, in the happy hunting grounds he would learn the answer to the strange riddle of the white man's suicide.

East of the Williwaw (3rd part of 4) . . . . . LESLIE T. WHITE 86
In the teeth of Cape Stiff weather four men sail out into the Straits of Magellan in a twenty-five foot sloop to buck the Nazi pocket battleship, *Admiral Schneider*, and save, if they can, their doomed estancia from the dogs of war.

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Cover by Frederick Blakeslee
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Kenneth S. White, Editor

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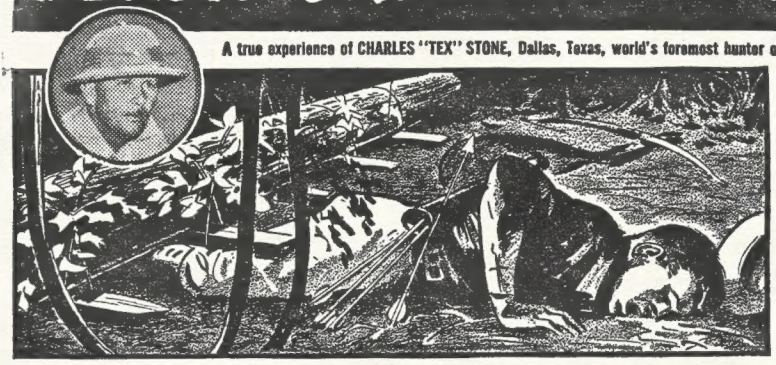
FANGS BARED, THE JUNGLE BEASTS CROUCHED TO SPRING!

A true experience of CHARLES "TEX" STONE, Dallas, Texas, world's foremost hunter of big game with bow and arrows



"RETURNING FROM A HUNTING TRIP in the African bush one night," writes Mr. Stone, "I stopped to re-set a heavy log trap. Putting aside the haunch of meat I was carrying, I lifted the deadfall. Suddenly I slipped! The log fell, pinning me flat!

"THEN I HEARD A LION ROAR! It had followed the scent of the fresh meat! As I worked frantically to free myself, there was a stealthy rustle in the underbrush! I knew that death crouched in the darkness! Then I thought of my flashlight . . . switched it on . . .

"TWO ENORMOUS LIONS stood snarling at me . . . ready to spring! But the piercing beam held them at bay. Digging frantically at the soft earth, I finally got free of the trap. Thanks to those dependable 'Eveready' *fresh* DATED batteries, I was soon back at camp.

(*Signed*) *Charles "Tex" Stone*"

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NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to Lost Trails will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and for women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or for any other reason in the judgment of the editorial staff. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Nat Williams, (generally known as 'Old Kentuck' while in the service), P. O. Box #276, Veterans Home, Napa Co., Calif., would like to hear from John W. Williams, (called 'The Psalm Singer' by his intimates), and Harry C. Morris, (a railroad man), both of whom served in Co. "H" of the 50th Iowa Vol. Infantry in 1898. Also Charles A. Moore, and Sgt. Joseph C. (Dago) Watkins, both of whom served in Co. "I" of the same regiment at the same time.

Cpl. Vernts or Verntz, Co. E, 1st. U. S. Engnrs., wounded in the battle of Ste. Mihiel. I have a photo taken of you at the time. You may have it if you wish. . . . During the last unpleasantness I was a 1st Lieut. of Inf. attached to the 1st. U. S. Engnrs. and in my official capacity carried and used a small camera. During the battle of Ste. Mihiel, in the neighborhood of Mont Sec, I think, I took a picture of a wounded American soldier surrounded by German prisoners. The kodak being of the "autographic" type, I noted on the film "Cpl. Vernts (z)". In clearing out an old trunk recently, I came across a print of the above and vaguely remember that at the time I took the photo I promised the wounded man a copy of the picture, if it turned out well. In the excitement of battle, and afterward I forgot all about sending him a print. Apparently, he was a member of Co. E, 1st. Engrs. or he might have been of some infantry outfit. H. S. Bonney, 1537 Euterpe St., New Orleans, La.

I would like to locate my father whose name, I believe, is Jack Allen, age about sixty. He worked in the sugar mills in Philadelphia about 25 years ago, for a man named Walter Norman McConkey. My mother, Annie Mary Procter, was born in Ireland. A man named Joe Maxwell, who lived with my parents, and my mother ran away together and took me with them. My mother and I went by the name of Maxwell. I was the youngest of five children. I believe I have two brothers and two sisters, whom I do not know. Anyone who knows them or my father, please communicate with Mrs. Bessie E. Camomile, c/o Elevator, National Bank Bldg., Lima, Ohio.

Herbert Greenway would like news of his brother or sister, last heard of in Birmingham, England. Please write, R.1., Santa Maria, Calif.

I am trying to locate my father, Frank L. Clark, a U. S. citizen, who married my mother, a Canadian, in Boston, Mass., on Feb. 9, 1901. I was born in Blackville, New Brunswick, Canada. My parents were divorced in 1902 or 1903. In 1915, my mother and stepfather brought me from Katonah, N. Y. to Saskatchewan, where we resided until I myself married a girl from the U. S. Her parents live in Minnesota, and as my own mother lives in Maine, I am anxious to return to the States with my family whom I have taught to regard themselves as U. S. citizens. My three oldest boys are in high school and first year university from where they will eventually go into the military forces (U. S., I hope). Now I must establish my father's U. S. citizenship before I can get home. Hence this request for help. I am unable to locate my father's people who resided in Melrose, Mass, about 1905, I think. Arthur Lester Clark-Marlow, P. O. 5, St. James, Man., Canada.

Henry Gould, last heard of at Ruthven, Iowa, in the fall of 1908. Any information as to his whereabouts would be appreciated by his son, of whose existence he is not aware. Dan F. Townsend, 705 S. Sloan, Compton, Cal.

James P. Brahaney, known as Pat or Irish, was discharged from the Marines at Quantico, in 1938, and I believe lives in the vicinity of Pittsburgh. From 1935 to 1937, he served at the Submarine Base, at Coco Solo, Panama. I have some important news for him and should like very much to hear from him. A. L. Craig, Corporal, USMCR (AO), Reserve Aviation Unit, U.S.N.R. Air Base, Robertson, Mo.

(Continued on page 8)

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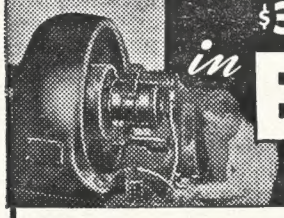

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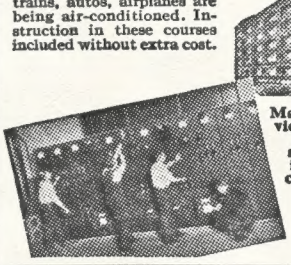

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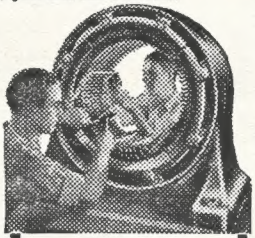

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(Continued from page 6)

I appeal for help in my 25-year search for my mother, who may be identified as follows: Maiden name, Florence Belle Stanfield, born 1882, at Springfield, Mo., where her people settled from Mobile, Ala. Married William Taylor Lockard, 1897. He died accidentally near Huntington, Ark., 1906. She remarried, name Ed Costello of Texarkana, Ark., about 1907, and divorced him at Muskogee, Okla., about 1914. Last heard from in 1916 while working in a restaurant at Ft. Smith, Ark. One rumor that she went to Omaha, Nebr. could not be traced. May have remarried and be known under another name. Her children are Ethel, Isabel and Carl. Anyone possessing any knowledge of her whereabouts will render a human service by communicating with her married daughter, Mrs. Ethel Lockard Williams, c/o General Delivery, Vinita, Okla.

My brother, Fred Irving, originally lived in Rochester, N. Y., and was last heard from in 1914 when he was employed as a brakeman in or near Portland, Ore. In 1911 and 1912, he worked for the government on surveys around Fairbanks, Alaska, and in the winter was with a prospecting party around Fairbanks and Dover. One of his pals forwarded a letter to my address, stating that he had won out on a suit regarding a claim. My brother was 5 feet 11 inches in height, weight 160 lbs., dark eyes, brown hair, and walked very erect. Anyone knowing his whereabouts, please communicate with Percy Irving, 3021 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, N. Y.

My brother, Richard Peyton Symmes, has been missing since 1918. He was last heard from at Peru, Kans., and was living with Mr. and Mrs. Perry Miley, who were farming in that neighborhood. He was born and raised in Topeka, Kans. His age is 32. His mother's present name is Mrs. May Wyer, and she has tried many ways to locate him, with no success. Harry J. Symmes, c/o Mrs. May Wyer, 933 Paseo, Kansas City, Mo.

Roland Harder, formerly of Co. 'C', 27th Inf., Hawaii, last heard of in Johnsville, Cal. Probably in or near a California mining town. Anyone knowing his whereabouts please communicate with Chas. L. McFadden, 1320 South Carmelina, West Los Angeles, Cal.

Would like to hear from the descendants of Bill Hogan of Rockingham Co., Virginia, and James Hogan whose farm was at the mouth of Hickman Creek, Ky. Also would like information about Clinton J. True, who was Colonel of Inf. 40th Reg., mustered at Grayson, Carter Co., Ky. Also Henery or Henry E. Ware, 1st Lt. of Co. E, 9th Reg. of Ky. Please write Robert E. Ware, Clemson College, S. C.

I would like to hear from my old friend, Percy Wells. I last saw him in North Yokama, Wash. We roomed in the same hotel, hunted and shot target together. That was in the fall and winter of 1909. Percy Wells, if you are in the land of the living, write to your old friend, Chas. B. Baker, R.F.D. 2, New Kensington, Pa.

Any information leading to the whereabouts of Frank Kelley Robinson will be appreciated. When last heard from in October, 1938, he was in Detroit, Mich. He is 30 years old, about five feet five inches tall, weight about one hundred sixty. Dark brown hair and eyes. Frank, if you see this, please write to your parents. J. W. Robinson, Zolfo Springs, Fla.

Wanted information of the following: 1st Sgt. Gerald R. Driscoll, 34th Inf., whom I last saw in Maryland, 1921; Norman W. Smith, 18th Inf., whom I last saw at Ft. Wadsworth, N. Y. 1922; and Sgt. Henry M. Phillips, 34th Inf., whom I last saw in Camp Eustis, Va., 1922. Their old supply sergeant would like to hear of or from them. Leo Neace, Ava, Ill.

Would like very much to get in touch with my mother and father, whereabouts unknown. I have received the following information from Sparta State School:

My name was Frankie Carpenter, born March 12, 1906, in Kansas City, Mo. My mother's name was Annie Woodmase at that time. I was adopted by a Silas Brown, whereabouts unknown. A Mrs. Hill, who was then Alice Carpenter, took care of me for Mr. Brown, and when I was about five years old, she adopted me, in Kansas City, Mo.

They tell me my mother married a Gould Bailey, and at last reports, which was some time ago, lived in Chicastra, or Chickasha, Okla. If anyone knows them, I would like to contact them. Francis Henry De Voe, Box 21-636, Represa, Cal.

Information wanted about: former nurse, Anna Kincaid, attached to Greenhut's Veterans Hospital, New York, April, May, 1919, last known address Washington, D. C., originally from Beloit, Wis.; former 1st Lt. H. S. Davidowitz, Acting Chaplain, 312th Infantry, 78 Division, Camp Dix and A.E.F., last known address given in Atlantic City.

(Continued on page 128)

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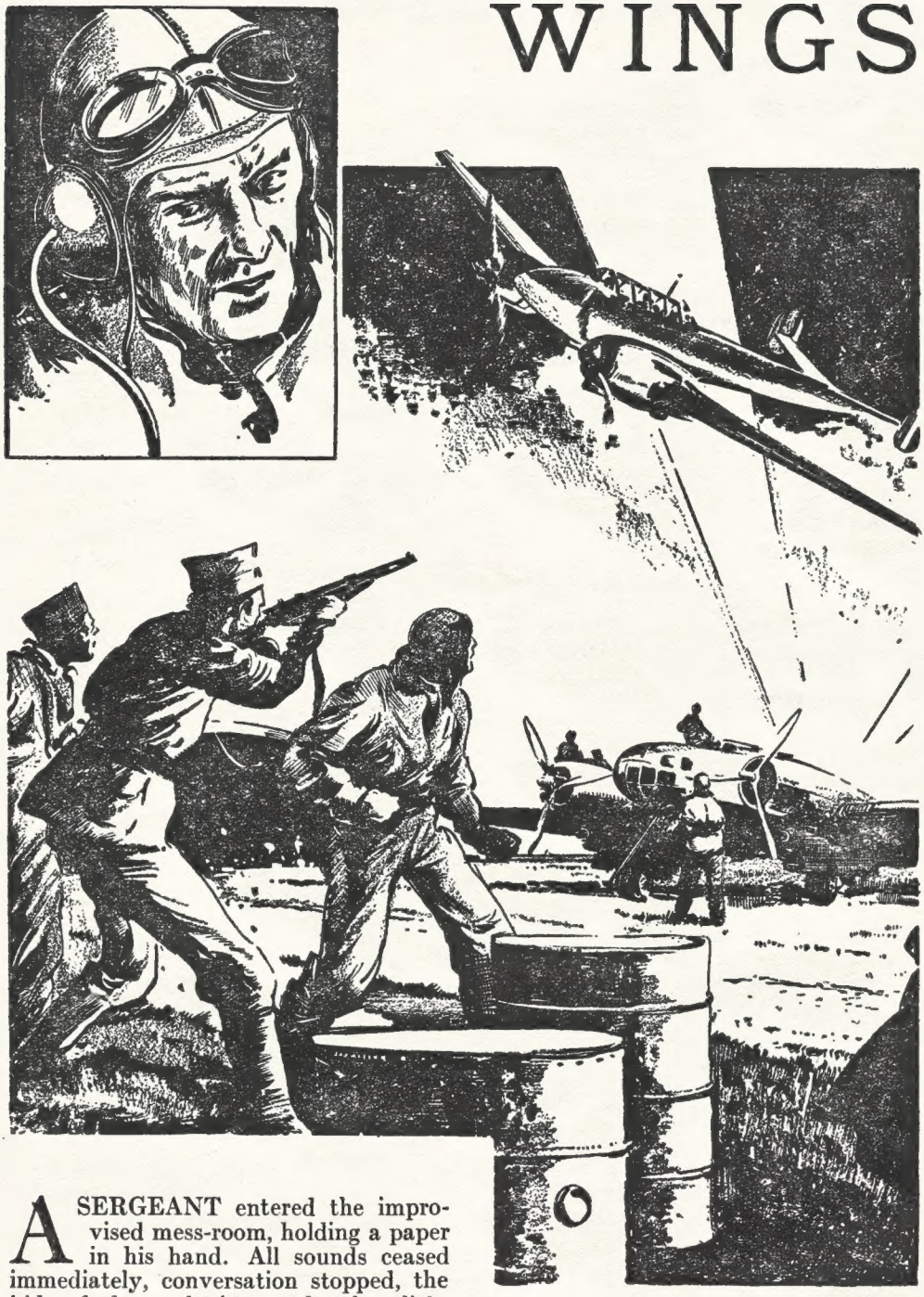
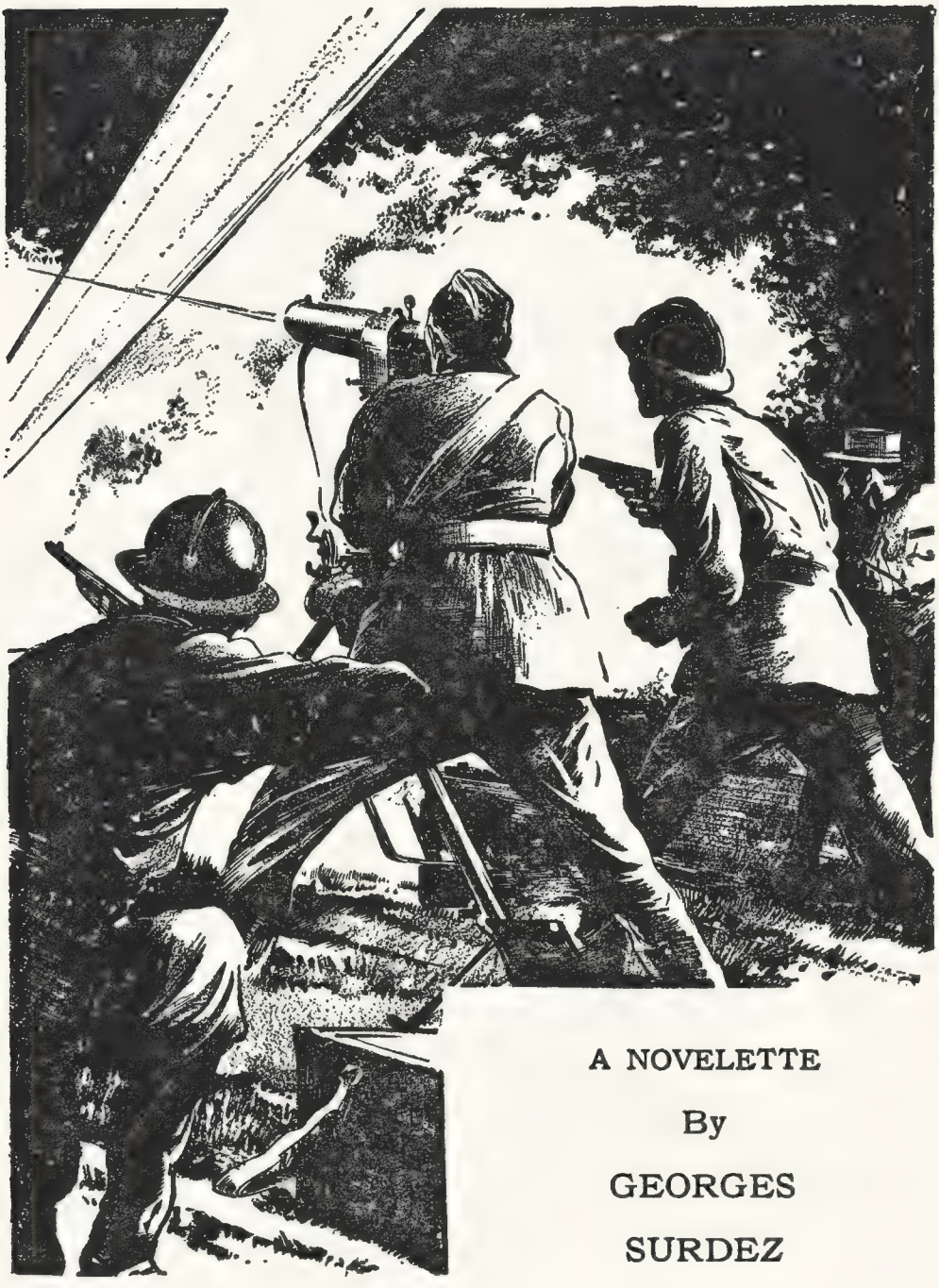


The Potez gathered speed, sprang into the air, and soared away as the sentries opened fire.

A SERGEANT entered the improvised mess-room, holding a paper in his hand. All sounds ceased immediately, conversation stopped, the bids of those playing cards, the clicking of glasses and bottles. Like the other pilots, Brocart felt that the news would be important. Two men playing chess in a corner looked up at the sudden silence, and even the Alsatian, Westermann, halted his endless game of soli-

OVER GIBRALTAR



A NOVELETTE

By

GEORGES

SURDEZ

taire, waited with the pack poised in his hand. The June sun poured through the windows, almost imperceptible vibrations shook the panes, caused by gusts of cannon fire many miles northward.

"Well, spit it out," urged a thin lieutenant, mixing himself a drink from several bottles lined on the plank serving as a bar. "Do we fly or not?"

"Doesn't look like it, Lieutenant," the sergeant hesitated, cleared his voice and read: "'The Colonel of Engineers commanding the Military at Rochemaure, in accordance with general orders communicated today by the High Command, orders as follows: All officers, non-commissioned officers and privates in units not actually engaged against the enemy, will be confined to quarters until further notice.'"

"You're kidding us—what's the idea?"

"'All leaves, liberties and town privileges for all ranks are hereby suspended. Commanders of units will see that the proper patrols and sentries are organized to assure the strictest compliance with the above order. The Colonel commanding trusts that in view of the gravity of the situation, all will cooperate without a murmur.'"

The colonel trusted in vain, for there were no murmurs, but a general clamor of protest from the young pilots. They were bored, restless, and had looked forward to the meager pleasures afforded by this country town after dark, one decent cafe at the hotel, and a dozen shabby spots, now crowded with refugees from France and Belgium.

"What does he mean, sentries?" someone challenged as the sergeant left the room.

"You know—" another man explained sarcastically, "a guy with a bayoneted rifle and a nasty disposition." He went to the window, leaned out. "Yep, we have ours already."

"Must be the end—"

"Turn on the radio," a voice suggested.

"No, no!" a half-dozen men protested, all talking at once. "Nothing like it to give you the pip! We're licked, but why all the public wailing? And we might get some official spokesman not up with the latest news—he'd tell us that everything was fine—that we were luring the Boches near the Mediterranean just to push them in."

WESTERMANN laid down a card, counted silently, his thick lips moving. The chess players resumed their game. A nation, their country, was crumbling, vanishing, and they found themselves trapped by old habits. What else was there to do?

"Too bad, Brocart," the slender lieutenant said, bringing his glass to the table. "You won't get your chance to square things after all."

"Who knows?" Brocart said.

He was a lean, rangy man of twenty-three, with a thin, strongly featured face, and sleek, dark hair. A patch of whiter skin showing beneath his chin revealed that he had but recently shaved off the sailor's beard which had been a popular affectation in the French Air Force at the beginning of the "phoney" war. He was pale, drawn; the dark blue uniform was loose on his frame. It was obvious that he had lost weight.

"Who knows?" the other repeated. "Going to carry on the war all alone?"

"England hasn't folded up as yet."

"Matter of days," said Varin. "Good old Brocart, he eats fire."

Lieutenant Brocart shrugged, leaned forward to follow the game of *belote* at the next table. And, before long, he became aware that the players were not showing their usual skill. The bids were quick, the tricks played in a few seconds. These men "felt," but dared not talk. Occasionally, when the windows shook a bit more than usual, one would look up, seem about to speak, to shout. Then the cigarette would be replaced between the quivering jaws.

"Somebody ought to pay for this mess," a man volunteered.

"Skip it, skip it. No politics."

"Why do they have to keep us locked up?"

"So we won't get into trouble. Shut up, Peletier."

"I still say somebody should be made to—"

"Shut up—here's the old man."

When Brocart had left the squadron's field in Lorraine, on the fifth day of the blitzkrieg, that name had been humorous, applied to Captain Lorand. It fitted now, for he had taken on fifteen years in six weeks; his face was lined, his gestures nervous.

He waved aside the drink offered him.

"There isn't much to say," he started, standing with his back against the wall, near the door. "Just that it looks as if it's over. The preliminaries of the Armistice are being discussed; it will be signed tomorrow or the day following. The German penetration will continue until the actual signing, and some planes will remain active on our side. But our squadron is through, grounded for good.

"You need feel no shame and no remorse. Whatever happened elsewhere, the aviation was sound. You know that we downed three machines for each one we lost, and that seems to hold good in all outfits. What men could do, we did. I drove you hard. It was my duty. Some of you flew eighteen hours a day, for weeks. Our human material was better than our machines.

"We'll probably be separated by the shake-up that will follow. I felt that I wished to thank you. That's all."

They sat down at a sign from him. And an embarrassed silence lasted for several seconds. Then Westermann spoke. "We were always glad to work for you, Captain." And several heads bobbed in agreement.

"Brocart, can you spare me a minute?"

"Naturally, Captain."

The lieutenant followed his chief out of the shack, into another, where the office was located. There was a field-telephone on the table, maps and patrol schedules on the walls.

"Sit down. Have a cigarette." Lorand looked at the younger man for a moment. "I was glad to see you arrive this morning. Now, I'm sorry you came. I'll sign you for an order for convalescent leave, and you can go tomorrow. If I were you, I'd leave France."

"Why, Captain?"

"There will be much unpleasantness." Lorand paused, thoughtfully. "Uprisings, perhaps. And who knows, another war, against another enemy. The feeling against Great Britain will become very bitter for a while. You've suffered enough. Join your family in America."

"My parents are in Paris, Captain."

"Ah! Unfortunate." Lorand drummed on the table for a moment. "What happened to you, anyway? Your showing up out here was little short of a miracle. I had a telephone report that you had landed safely, then nothing."

"It's the usual story, Captain. You know I took off with the bunch on May fourteenth. Nine minutes later I was coming down. My machine was burning and I got out. I landed all right, sprained my left ankle a bit, but I could limp along. I wanted to get back to the squadron, of course.

"But the roads were cluttered with refugees. Parachutists and motorcyle troops were reported close. In fact, the first cops I met were suspicious of me, and took me to the mayor of the nearest village. I persuaded the mayor that I was a French officer, but the best he could do for me was to lend me a bicycle. I gave up trying to get back to your field, and headed for the nearest military center. I reported, and they phoned in.

IN THE afternoon, about twilight, I was riding slowly with a lot of people. There were a lot of carts loaded with furniture, junk, and kids. Old men and women. A lot of Boche machines came flying, going northeast, bombers returning from a raid. They came down, and just for the hell of it, machine-gunned the crowd.

"It was the dirtiest thing I ever saw. You've seen a plane crumble under machine gun fire, Captain? You should have seen that crowd melt. Hundreds of people dived for the ditches, others scattered in the fields. The planes came down low, circled, and kept shooting—probably emptying their guns for the fun of it. It was like a nightmare, you know, stupid and senseless.

"I had dropped into the ditch, but I got out to pick up some kid whose mother had dropped. He had landed face down in the grass, and I was afraid

he would stifle. Same bullet that had killed the mother had gone through the kid's shoulder. Fifty caliber bullet, you understand. The arm was hanging by a shred. I knew he would bleed to death soon, and I headed for a road-mender's shack, which had a Red Cross flag on it.

"I was running. A bullet hit my leg again, the left leg, the bad one. Luckily, it grazed the flesh, just took off a chunk. But it knocked me on my face, and I must have passed out for a while. For when I got up, the planes were gone and the refugees were on the road again, streaming by just as if nothing had happened. The dead that had been in the road had been tossed into the ditch. I remembered the kid, looked for him. He was dead.

"A boy about three years old. Better for him, as he would have been crippled. I put him near his mother and looked for my bike. It was gone. I was bleeding badly. There was no doctor at the shack, but an old woman was doing what she could. After my dressing, she got me a lift.

"The next morning, my leg had swollen to three times its size, and I had a hell of a fever. I don't remember much, but it must have taken me four or five days to reach Paris. I was there about three weeks. My parents were notified and came to see me. My mother, who is an American, wanted me to pick up my passport at the Embassy.

"But I did not want to leave France, and I reminded her that as I was officially in the French Army, I might be picked up for desertion—which would be unpleasant in war time. That scratch healed quickly, and I wanted to get back into a machine. I had sworn to get a Boche or two, when I was hobbling to that dressing-station. I flew against them, fired at them, before—but, Captain, it will be different if I get another chance. I won't feel right again until I have killed a brace of them."

"You've learned to hate," Lorand stated quietly. "But how did you find us? Is your leg all right?"

"When the Boches got near Paris, I left as I did not want to be interned in some camp. I tried to locate you, for joining any outfit where I was unknown was dangerous, with all the talk about spies and fifth columnists. Yesterday, in Angouleme, I accidently heard you were coming here. My leg? Well, the wound still wets a little at times, if I walk about too long. But in another week—"

"You'll have a chance to rest now," Lorand said with a wry smile. "I keep hoping against hope that something will happen, that we'll go on fighting. You know how many of our chaps have gone. I didn't want to mention them, in there. I hate to think they died for nothing. Yet, in a way, they were lucky, not to see this."

Brocart went back to the mess-room a few minutes later.

THERE he discovered that the sensation of unbearable nervousness which gripped him had affected the others. He stepped into the middle of a scene between Peletier and Westermann, which the others did not appear to wish to check. Peletier was a rather short, thick-set lad, with a red face and fancy muscles he liked to exhibit. But normally the best-natured chap in the world. Westermann was long, skinny, with blond hair and an almost feminine manner.

"What did you say?" he was challenging.

"I'm not afraid to repeat it. I said you were glad inside, because you're really a Boche. Your old man served in the Germany Army in the other war. Deny it if you can!"

"Certainly, and my grandfather was in the French Army in 1870. So what?"

"So you're glad to be a Boche again."

"You're crazy." Westermann started to line the deck again. "What can I do about this? I'm in the French Army, am I not? And I did my job as well as the next guy, didn't I?" He wore the War Cross with a number of palms.

"Your people don't even speak French. You write them in German."

"Yes. So what?"

"So you're a German. If anybody called me a Boche, know what I'd do?"

"Brave chap, aren't you? You out-

weigh me sixteen kilogs and you box regularly." The Alsatian shrugged, placed a king carefully in a vacant space. "Don't count on me to help you spend your surplus energy. But I warn you not to come near me with those big mitts of yours."

"What would you do, Boche?" Peletier stepped forward.

"Cut it out," Brocart said, reaching for his arm. He was amazed that no one had interfered before. There usually were two or three cool heads in this crowd.

"Let go of me, you!" The other pilot tore free. "You're another guy who shouldn't be there. You're only half-French. We should have kicked you out, all of you, and we wouldn't be where we are now. And you know when to duck, Brocart. When the going got rough, did you vanish—a nice little flesh wound! When regular guys were getting smashed up and burned all over the landscape!"

"You're drunk," Brocart said.

"Sure, I've had a couple of drinks. What else is there to do? But Boche-face over there, he isn't drunk. He plays his game and keeps his ears open. One thing we've learned; get rid of all Alsatians, all Americans, all Englishmen. France for Frenchmen!" He strode forward. "What's the Boche grinning at? You think I should have said France for Boches, don't you? You'll see—the last word hasn't been spoken yet!"

"I hope not," Westermann replied.

Peletier reached across the table to grasp his shoulder. "What do you mean by that crack?"

"Let go of me, you fool!"

"Want some of this, eh?" Peletier drew back his fist.

Without rising, Westermann picked up a heavy bottle on the next table, swung. The glass was thick and did not break, but the sweetish, sickening smell of spilled anisette rose. Peletier's hand relaxed, he reeled back, sat down, then rolled over.

"He looked for it," Westermann declared. He played another card, but his hand quivered. The others stood about, motionless and mute, for a second. Then several men went to raise Peletier.

"Some blood out of his ear," announced one. "You probably fractured his skull. Better get him a doctor."

To Brocart's astonishment, sympathy appeared to be with the wounded man. This was his first real experience with xenophobia; he had not yet learned how swiftly hatred of foreigners can flame in a defeated nation.

CHAPTER II

ESCAPE TO WAR

CAPTAIN Lorand appeared almost at once. He ordered Westermann to his room, had Peletier carried to the ambulance, a telephone call put through to the hospital in the town. An orderly appeared, with a bucket and a mop, wiped off the blood left on the planking. Lorand lighted a cigarette, addressed the men in the room.

"You see that the order to keep everyone in quarters was not so foolish. Peletier and Westermann have been friends, have flown side by side for months. And see what happens! I'll have a talk with Westermann later. Naturally, it is understood that Peletier slipped and fell. A court-martial, punishment for our comrade, would not do any good. Agreed?"

"Yes, Captain."

"What was the row?"

"Well, you see, Captain, Westermann's an Alsatian and—" The officer held up his hand for silence, and they all heard what had attracted his attention. A powerful motor throbbed in the sky, coming nearer rapidly, and they all knew from the sound that it was not a French motor. They crossed to the windows and Varin, who had keen eyes, pointed out a moving blotch in the blue.

"There it is—coming right over—"

All felt the tightening of their stomach muscles, the unconscious bracing against danger, bomb explosions. There were six pursuit planes and four bombers in the open, inviting targets. The strange machine approached with great speed.

"Captain, let us—"

"A moment, a moment—" Captain

Lorand said. "I believe he's landing."

"Yes, he's coming down."

They rushed out of the room, jostling aside the surprised sentry. They ran across the field toward the plane which was rolling to a stop, a large monoplane, with low wings. All recognized the blue, white, and red circles of the British Air Force. Brocart identified it as a Fairey Battle Bomber. For a moment, nothing moved, the propeller whirled with decreasing speed. Then the glass hood was pushed back, a face appeared.

"Anyone here speak English?"

"I do," Brocart called back.

"Where are we?"

"Ancone Field, at Rochemaure."

"We've got a chap here who's badly done up." The Englishman pointed to holes in the canopy. We were growing short on petrol, also, and the buggers were so thick and feverish we had to swing south, hoping for the best. A bit out of our way, eh what?"

Several men had arrived from the sheds with a stretcher. A man in the plane, probably the machine gunner, helped the pilot with the limp weight of the wounded man. The body, in its baggy flying suit, was lowered carefully into the arms of the orderlies. The wounded man's face was gray, his eyes were closed. Lorand ordered him taken to the ambulance.

"Think he'll be all right?" the pilot asked anxiously.

"Oh, certainly. We have a car coming to take one of our fellows to the local hospital in town, and he'll be taken along. I'll keep you informed, or see that you get news if I leave here. But you chaps had better come over and have a drink."

The two Britishers talked together for a few seconds.

"Thanks, old man. But one at a time. We need petrol, and some of your men don't know these machines." The pilot climbed up, slid out of the cockpit, shook hands with the nearest men. He turned once. "All right, Cosby, take care of things—" Then he fell in step with Brocart, following the group of Frenchmen toward the sheds. "Name's Ferson, James Ferson. I say, what is the truth about France packing up?" he asked.

"Looks very much like it," Brocart admitted.

"Can't say I blame the chaps a bit. Have had a horrible time of it, haven't they? Thank God for the good old ditch!" Ferson had found his cigarettes, lighted up. As he did so, he looked at his hands with dismay. They were stained with his mate's blood. "Could do with a wash. Have some time, you know. I shan't try to beat back until after dark, you see. Too many Messerschmitts, would never make it to England."

"Can you make it all right at night?"

"Have the instruments for it, and all that. Left Bognor today, just after noon, so no reason why we shan't get back."

"No place to land in the north of France?"

"No, things are in no end of a mess. Cherbourg was as nasty a show as Dunkirk, on a smaller scale. Rather glum crowd, your friends—" Then Ferson checked himself. "Sorry, of course, forgot!"

BROCART took him to the laundry shed, which had been promoted to shower-room. The Englishman stripped off the heavy flying suit, then the uniform underneath. He was very young, probably not more than nineteen, a nice boy with a rounded, pink face, colorless hair and childish blue eyes.

Captain Lorand appeared in the doorway and beckoned.

"I've given orders to hurry his refueling, Brocart. Because of the hospital case, I'll have to report his arrival to the authorities. I'm holding it up as long as I dare. I don't know your friend's exact status."

"His status, Captain?"

"Yes, whether an ally, a guest, or a prisoner. We're practically out of the war, remember, and we might be ordered to keep him here as an evidence of good will to our—victors. You know that since negotiations have been started with Italy, our southern fields have received instructions not to permit British machines to leave to raid Turin and

Milan. There have been incidents, conflicting instructions. Personally, I shall not hold him, no matter what happens. But they might send the police out from town."

"I'll tell him."

Brocart took in a stiff drink of brandy. Ferson was dressing, a cigarette between his lips. He listened to the information without expression.

"Can't stay here, of course."

"There's time for a bite." Brocart led the way to the mess-room. The other French pilots were friendly enough, and the cook brought a chicken *en casserole* that did credit to the squadron, even if warmed over from lunch. Ferson sent a portion out to his comrade in the plane, with a note explaining the situation briefly. Before he was through eating, a note came from Captain Lorand.

"Your comrade is all right," Brocart translated. "That is, he'll probably live. The hospital just phoned. Our captain was in touch with the commanding officer. No instructions concerning you, which looks good."

Ferson helped himself to brandy, nodded. For a brief moment, his eyes glistened with tears. Then he was calm.

"Hate to leave the poor chap here, somehow." He indicated the growing darkness. "I can start in thirty minutes, I think." He gave the waiter a folded wad of money. "Share with the cook, tell him, Brocart. Thanks and all that, your bunch—you know."

"Ask him what he thinks of the war," a Frenchman urged.

"If it isn't finished by the end of August," Ferson said, "we shall win. The Empire has scarcely got into it, you know. But it may take time—three, four years."

"See here, Ferson," Brocart said, making up his mind suddenly. "With one chap less, you have room for me, haven't you?"

"Why, yes."

"Will you take me along to England?"

Ferson reflected a moment. "Now?"

"Yes, when you leave?"

"It could be done. Yes."

"I'll get my gear ready. Don't want any argument here, so I'll pick it up quietly. Hold on a while."

He went to the room he shared with Varin and two others. Only Varin was with him, watched him sort out his belongings, roll up the flying suit. Brocart opened the window, and dropped the stuff to the ground outside.

"What's the idea?" Varin asked.

"The captain himself suggested I should get out. Ferson's agreed to take me along."

"I suppose it's useless to argue."

"Perfectly useless. After I have had my sight on a Dornier, and got it out of my system, we'll talk again."

"If we break relations with England, you realize you'll be interned, Brocart?"

"No." Brocart laughed. "I have a dual nationality. I was born in America. They have other Americans in the British Air Force. Moreover, I understand that quite a few Frenchmen have already gone across to carry on."

"You're a sucker."

"I suppose so. Who isn't?" He shook hands with Varin. "Don't tell the others. There may be more than one Peletier in the outfit. What are you going to do?"

"I'll be demobilized and go back to work."

Brocart rejoined Ferson in the mess-room. Night had fallen completely. Captain Lorand appeared to shake hands with Ferson, wish him luck.

"I'd like to go as far as the plane with Ferson, Captain. Could you notify the sentry that it's all right for me to be out?"

"Yes." Lorand went to a window, called the guard. The helmeted head and the rigid gleam of the bayonet appeared. "Allow two officers to pass. They're not going to town, but to the field. I'll be responsible if there is any kick."

"Understood, Captain."

"They have you under guard?" Ferson asked, bewildered.

"Yes. The government is afraid of incidents, clashes between the military and the civilians. Many think there'll be a revolution in France before long. Wouldn't be surprised. Our politicians sold us out. There was a strong peace

party right along—I suppose you know?"

"Oh, we have those too," Ferson laughed. "But there's been a brushing-up the past few days."

AS HE slipped into his flying suit, two of the French pilots came forward, Masaniel and Querlin. They wanted information as to how to qualify for the British Service.

"Can be managed easily, I suppose," Ferson told them. "We have no end of Poles, Norwegians, Dutchmen now. And I hear there's a central office to handle all French enlistments. Just rumors, you know. But there should be no trouble."

After final handshakings, the two left the building. Brocart located his bundle easily. They plodded across the darkened field. A strange, chocking emotion swept Brocart. He had spent more than half of his life in France, had served her in North Africa, in Syria, and on the Western Front. He was about to leave her soil, for an unknown length of time. He felt like crying.

"Where are your people?" Ferson asked.

"In Paris. My grandmother is too old to travel, and my parents would not leave her. My father's beyond military age. Went to the States in 1917 as an instructor, my mother joined him—they'd married in 1915—and I was born there. My father is European representative of a couple of machinery firms."

"My father's a tailor." Ferson mentioned a well-known establishment. "Lost a foot at Ypres. Cosby's the lad with the shekels. Younger son and all that. Three thousand quid per. But he's very careful with it, you'll find out."

The sound of a car motor came from behind them; headlights threw their long shadows on the turf. "Lieutenant Brocart—Lieutenant Brocart—" a voice shouted.

Brocart knew at once that something had gone wrong.

"Keep going, Ferson, don't wait for me."

"Righto. Ta ta."

Ferson started to run. The boy had quick reflexes and had understood that protestations, delay, would be fatal to his departure. Brocart heaved his bundle far to one side, turned and walked toward the car, which crawled toward him.

He stepped out of the glare when it was close, shut his eyes, re-opened them. And he discerned several men in the machine, at least two of them gendarmes.

"Are you Lieutenant Brocart?"

"Yes."

"You're under arrest."

"What's the trouble? What's the charge? I have my captain's permission to—"

An impatient voice broke in: "The plane! Where's the other—the British pilot?"

"He stepped aside a minute. Last chance, you understand."

The man with the sharp voice stood in the car. Brocart could see the glint of gold braid on his uniform. A major at least. He shouted: "Don't turn on those lights. The machine must remain here!" Then he addressed Brocart again. "Where's the plane?"

"What plane, sir?"

"The British machine! Which is it?"

Brocart turned, and almost laughed. Yes, to a man unaccustomed to a flying field, the scene might be puzzling. The car's headlights illuminated several machines, Bloch Pursuit Planes, Potez Scouting. The Fairey was some distance beyond, in the darkness.

"Those are our machines, Major," another man said.

"Where's the British plane?" The man was growing furious. "Oh, there, someone—aren't there any guards, any mechanics—"

A stentorian roar of a motor crashed out suddenly, there were spurts of flame in the darkness. Ferson was leaving, without lights. No, not quite, for a dark, shapeless object suddenly appeared in the path of the automobile's headlights, swerved to follow them.

"Stop, stop!" the major called out, foolishly. "Shoot at him—shoot—"

One of the men in the back seat rose, opened fire with a light automatic rifle.

From various corners of the field came shouts, and one or two shots. Nervous sentries had pressed their triggers. The Battle Bomber was lifting, lifting. For a fraction of a second, it was visible against the stars, then it leaped from sight. The man had emptied his magazine and settled back.

"You damn fool," the major said. "You missed him!"

"Major," Brocart pointed out, seriously, "those machines are armored against fifty caliber bullets. It isn't certain that the gendarme missed. He simply wasn't equipped for the task?"

"You're a humorist, aren't you?"

"In my spare time, Major." Brocart was careless. What had he to lose?"

"You were deserting—"

"No, Major."

"Then what were you doing out here?"

"I have my captain's permission, I must repeat, Major."

But one of the men rushing out to investigate the trouble, having stumbled on Brocart's bundle, brought it to the car. The major alighted and examined it in the glare of the headlights.

"I suppose you always take this gear with you on a walk?"

"What is it, Major?"

"You know damn well what it is!" The major turned back a fold of cloth, revealed a tag: *Brocart, Raymond, Lieutenant.* But by that time, the motor of the Fairey Bomber was a distant drone.

AFTER a stormy conference in Captain Lorand's office, Brocart was held in open arrest at the field, pending an investigation and possible court-martial. The charges seemed a joke until the Vichy Decree of June 28th was issued. It sentenced to death all Frenchmen who continued to fight Germany or helped her enemies.

This decree acted as a challenge, and officers, privates, started to desert. Brocart was under particular watch, and had less chance than others. He chafed for three weeks in semi-confinement. Meanwhile, events were rushing in the outside world. There came the tragedy of Oran, when a French fleet anchored at Mers-el-Kebir, the naval base, was partly destroyed by the mighty guns of the British Mediterranean Squadron. Throughout France, there was an explosion of feelings against England, and the Nazi-controlled newspapers as well as those of Vichy clamored for immediate retaliation.

But as the cold, ruthless grip of the conquerors was tightening, spirits sobered, and many understood the necessity of the execution of certain French vessels. Britain was fighting for her life. Brocart realized that this was somewhat similar to the destruction of the Danish Fleet by Nelson. He felt, and said, that had ships manned by British seamen been potential tools against the Empire, the British would have sunk them as deliberately.

France was waging a civil war, not yet army against army, but of individuals. There were those who were for siding with the victors, those who were for helping Britain openly, but the vast majority of the French, however, were bewildered people, stunned and humiliated by a crushing defeat, who swayed this way and that with each new development.

At the field itself, there were numerous incidents. Machines to be delivered to the Germans or Italians burned mysteriously, or crashed after short flights. Mechanics were arrested, questioned. Some of the officers applied for and obtained their certificates of demobilization. Brocart could not do this, as he had military charges pending against him.

Lieutenant Westermann deserted. The racism movement in defeated France was growing, for beaten people always seek the cause of their disaster outside of themselves. And it had come out that the Alsatian's mother was a Jewess. Peletier was discharged from the hospital at about that time, and far from feeling embarrassment at having wrongly accused the poor chap of German sympathies, he boasted: "You see, I was right—he was an enemy of France."

Then Brocart's name appeared on a list of men to be court-martialed for

anti-French activities. He had assisted a British machine in its escape from internment. He laughed at the accusation, of course. France had not yet surrendered when he had helped Ferson. But Captain Lorand took a more serious view of his plight.

"You don't risk death, no. But they may sock you with two or three years in prison. It's not a question of justice, but one of example."

In mid-July, two days before the court-martial, Varin sought Brocart in his room. "Have you a few thousand francs available? Do you still wish to get away? All right, I have a plan—"

He outlined it. Forgotten in one of the hangars was the partly dismantled body of an old Potez plane. Its two motors were useless. But on a siding near the railroad station, there was a car loaded with Hispano-Suiza engines, in transit to Italy. Civilian employees, mechanics, sentries, could be bought off.

Shortly before dawn of the day when Brocart was to face his judges, he took his place at the controls of the rebuilt machine. He was a bit worried, as there had been no chance for a test flight. But anything was better than prison. A dim, grayish light was spreading rapidly when the plane was rolled outside. There were hurried handshakes, whispered good wishes. Varin was settled in the back, with nothing to do, as the machine guns were not loaded.

The whirring of the starter was answered by coughing, sputtering explosions from the cold motors. And at the first sound, soldiers appeared at the run. Then the two engines caught, the rhythmic beat of the cylinders started, grew to a powerful, steady roar. The Potez started to roll, gathered speed, sprang into the air and soared away as the sentries opened fire.

Brocart circled the field, banked, and swooped low over the barracks in which he had spent gloomy weeks. He had a comforting vision, upturned faces, waving hands. The remaining pilots wishing him luck. Then he headed south.

North Africa, Gibraltar, England—Fighting!

In an hour, the machine passed Aiguesmortes and started across the Mediterranean Sea. Varin and he had discussed the situation, decided to try for Oran. Heading straight for Gibraltar on the first hop would have been risky, as it would have forced them close to the Spanish coast for many miles, and it was rumored that Spanish and Italian pursuit planes had brought down a few reckless Frenchmen.

The sun was rising, and Brocart could see the gleam of the sea far below the gold-tinged clouds. The old Potez flew on like an arrow. And its pilot thought of the first man who had flown over this sea, as famous in his day as Lindbergh, yet now even less remembered than Bleriot: Roland Garros.

Life moved fast in the Twentieth Century, and what had been an incredible achievement, a great adventure, was now a mere routine part of Brocart's flight. Roland Garros, first man to cross the Mediterranean by air, hero of the First World War, had escaped also, to fly and fight again. But more fortunate than Brocart, than the young pilots of today, he had escaped from foreigners, not from Frenchmen.

Garros had been spared Vichy.

CHAPTER III

A POINT OF HONOR

MIDNIGHT at the Silver Crow, Oranese hot-spot—and the orchestra unleashed a frenzied conga. Ten nations in ruins, London crouched under a hail of bombs, the sword of doom hanging over the universe, and young people danced, and Brocart danced. Why not? Tomorrow, the day after, in a week or a month, but sometime, he would reach Morocco, Gibraltar, England. A stupid catch-phrase kept time to the music inside his skull: *For there's work over the Channel, over the Channel.*

He was with a party of seven, three Englishmen stranded in Algeria, four young French officers. Only one of the Britishers was over military age, Greaver, who had loafed on the Azure Coast "until the ruddy roof fell in." Counting Brocart, that made seven

candidates for death. So why worry?

The girl, a professional hostess, that he held in his arms was smiling. She danced well. Naturally, her business. Yet she had told him that she was from Normandy, and without news of her home town—save what the papers printed, that it had been razed in the blitz.

Brocart was acquiring the Algerian mentality, for it was three weeks since the old rebuilt Potez had rolled to a stop on La Senia Airport, a couple of miles from Oran.

He had believed that he would be welcomed with open arms in North Africa. Instead, the machine was seized at once, the flyers put under arrest as deserters. But the authorities found it impossible to lock up fugitives. Algeria was filling with escaped French officers from all service branches. One ship alone had brought over more than four hundred, all eager to be given troops, to continue the struggle. They had expected French North Africa to be won over by de Gaulle in short order.

But most of the officials, many of the army men, obeyed Vichy. Those who wanted to fight on, to help Britain, were under suspicion. They were allowed to live where they pleased within town limits, but had to report once a day at the military police headquarters.

Brocart had served part of his regular army time in Oran, thought he knew the city. But he found the population uncertain as to its opinions, as if collectively dazed. The British, who had sunk a French fleet less than five miles away, safely, easily, like shooting fish in a bucket, were not popular. Yet the population wished for their victory, as they dreaded being turned over to Spain in the event of a complete German victory.

Moreover, Oran was swarming with spies, German spies, Italian spies, British spies, not counting the regular police, the secret agents from Vichy, the secret agitators for de Gaulle. An unseen and bitter war was being waged. A war not wholly without casualties, for Brocart soon heard yarns of mysterious disappearances, of corpses found floating in the port.

Get this, men, if you have trouble
With tender skin and wiry stubble:
Those Thin Gillettes—four for a dime—
Give slick, clean shaves, save dough and time!
New kind of edges on steel hard enough to cut glass
THIN
Gillette
BLADES
Gillette
4 for 10c
8 for 19c
Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade
Save Extra Money! Get The Big New Economy Package, 12 For 27c

There was an "underground railway" to get persons out of Algeria, across the border into Morocco, theoretically an independent protectorate. Brocart and Varin had to find it, and it was proving difficult.

"Be careful," men who had been longer in Africa warned them. "If you show that you wish to go, you'll be locked up. And don't fall for trying to cross the frontier with native guides, in small parties. The guides are Arabs, and they know you have not reported your departure, that there is no check-up. Somewhere on a mountain trail, they'll shoot you in the back, empty your pockets and roll your body into a ravine. Many fools who tried will never be seen again."

"They're right," Varin said.

He was cool, Brocart admitted, and intelligent. He had flown reconnaissance machines over the Maginot line, been transferred to Lorand's pursuit ships during the crisis. His father, a manufacturer of plumbing supplies in northern France, had been doing war work since September. Varin said he had had no news of him since the invasion.

Over the Channel—the Channel.

The dance ended and they went back to the table, where their companions hailed them. A battalion of empty champagne bottles in the center of the cloth showed that they were good customers. Greaver, a stout, baldish, dapper English gentleman, greeted them with comical politeness. He nodded toward the nearby table, where two men and two girls had taken seats. The girls were entertainers of the establishment, the men were strangers. One was of good height, light-skinned; the other short, dark.

"A brace of Roman heroes!" Greaver announced.

"Italians?"

"Yes, Armistice Commission."

THERE were such commissions in all large North African cities, to inspect and take delivery of materials of war surrendered by the terms of the capitulation. Unluckily for them, the British had turned the Mediterranean into a Crown Possession, so far as the surface was concerned, and the only material that could be delivered was aircraft. The Fleet Air Arm could not possibly intercept every machine that soared away from Africa and headed northeast.

Nevertheless, it was said that not a single plane had been delivered to Italy. Yet many methods had been tried. French pilots had been ordered to fly the planes to Italy. By bizarre, incredible bad luck, squadrons of such machines, seven, eight, twelve at a time, had made forced landings short of their goal, in Corsica, so badly smashed as to be useless. The Italians could suspect the pilots, but could prove nothing.

Then Italians were flown over in considerable numbers, to take charge of planes and fly them overseas. But strange misfortune befell those, too. The British intercepted many, shot them down, the others developed engine trouble long before sighting the Italian coast. This had occurred with such regularity, from all ports of Algeria, that the duty of flying surrendered planes back to Italian ports had become most unpopular in the Mussolinian forces.

Algerians of all races, French, Spanish, Moorish, while they felt a grudging admiration mixing with their hatred of the Nazis, felt amused scorn toward the Italians. Stabbing France in the back at the darkest hour of the German drive, Italy had been stopped cold by the French, yet profited by her ally's victory. Italy played the hyena to the German tiger.

There had been incidents in Algiers, when members of Italian commissions had appeared in public wearing splendid uniforms and sparkling medals. French officers had reminded them that they had not won a single battle, that they had no right to parade as victors. To avoid trouble, the commissioners had been ordered to wear mufti. But as they were known by sight, they were submitted to jeering remarks from the street urchins.

Doubtless, boredom had forced the two at the next table to chance unflattering remarks. They could pretend that they did not understand. They

drank champagne, danced, and joked with their partners.

"Really," Greaver said after a while, "these young women might show better taste. The classic retort, of course, is that one must live. Which suggests something really brilliant, really! What your countrymen, Brocart, would call a gag."

He rose, went to see the manager. Before very long, the two girls were called away by a page. They did not return for many minutes, the two Italians grew restless, and at last invited two other hostesses to join them. The customary bottle of champagne was brought by the waiter, the cork popped. The two girls left, did not reappear.

"Works splendidly, doesn't it?" Greaver declared.

"How is it done?" Brocart wondered.

"By a proper appeal to patriotism, of course. Also, British currency still is strong compared with the liras, and from now on it pays the girls better to go home than to remain with them. It's expensive, and I'm far from drowning in the stuff, you know, but a few pounds are well-invested in a good cause."

In fact, after they had invited two other pairs of girls, and bought two more quarts of champagne, only to find themselves alone, the Italian gentlemen grew nervous and irritated. There was not much that they could do or complain of without ridicule. The taller one evidently suggested leaving, for the other gesticulated, shook his head. "No, no, I'm not going!" And his skin turned from olive to plum color.

"He feels a speech coming on," Greaver announced. "Behold the Mussolinic protrusion of the lower jaw, the clenched fist snug against the right hip, the popping eyes! Unsightly little insect, isn't he?"

Brocart glanced at the Italian, could not repress a smile. The other perhaps guessed some connection between this smile and the mysterious disappearances of the ladies. He shook off his friend's restraining hand, rose, and addressed Brocart, who was in uniform. His French was excellent, but had a definite Italian lilt.

"A French officer should be ashamed to speak English in public, after the humiliation brought on his mother country by England."

Brocart was a bit drunk, knew his friends' eyes were on him.

"Is it one of the conditions of the Armistice, signor?"

"What do you mean?"

"That you have the right to speak to me? Have your masters obtained permission for you to address French officers and give them advice? If that is the case, I have no right to complain."

"My masters?"

"The Germans. They have made it possible for you to be here, remember."

BROCART was uttering aloud what the Italians knew everyone was whispering. They did not like this. The Italian tried to reply, found no words, lost his temper. He tried to strike Brocart, who was seated, with his open hand.

What followed was one of the natural incidents that could not go more smoothly if rehearsed fifty times. The man stood on the edge of the waxed dance floor, and as Brocart instinctively ducked, he slipped and spun around. The next moment, the aviator, who had his legs crossed, saw a tempting target and tapped it with his foot. It was a shove, not a kick.

But the poor chap was off balance, sprawled and slid for several feet, while dancing couples tumbled this way and that, with many shrieks and a few oaths. The music stopped, the waiters gathered.

The little man scrambled to his feet, incoherent with fury and shame. He headed for Brocart, who fended him off with one foot, laughing. Then the large man intercepted the little one. He appeared of a less sanguine breed, and although he was white and angry, he remained correct in his speech and manner.

"All my excuses, gentlemen," he said. He lowered his voice and spoke to his companion rapidly in Italian. What he said had the same effect on his listener as ice water poured down the spine. The little man bowed formally, spun

on his high heels and strode out of the club.

"I am Captain Javarone," the tall man introduced himself. "My colleague is Captain Moccia." Greaver named himself, Brocart and the others, and stiff nods were exchanged. "What happened is to be regretted. May I assure you that most of us, Italian officers, deplore the circumstances under which we came here. We would much prefer to be with combat forces. That is why our tempers are perhaps a bit short. If you will be so kind as to receive me tomorrow morning, we can arrange for the matter to be settled quietly."

"Just a moment, Captain," Greaver protested. "I am to blame—"

"Please, please!" Javarone straightened and smiled gently. "Monsieur Brocart is an officer, and certainly wishes to be held personally responsible for misplacing his boot."

Brocart nodded. When Javarone had left, the party sobered considerably, people huddled around, commenting. "Means a duel—probably excellent at it—I'd pick pistols—"

Brocart broke into a laugh.

"Don't worry about me. I don't want to put on side, you know, but he really plays in poor luck. My father was an expert, started me fencing at eight, which was a bore. At military school, I trimmed all the instructors. If he turns out to be very, very good, I have the reach, and all I have to fear is a seton stab in the forearm."

And he waved his well-wishers away.

"You're lucky it isn't the Javarone chap, you know," Greaver said, lighting a cigarette. "There's a cool hand for you. He might be British."

"That's your idea of a compliment," Brocart laughed. "And if you tell him that, *you'll* have to fight *him!*"

The party went out of the Silver Crow, crossed a few squares, and entered a small restaurant which catered to such late customers. Oran was growing short of many things, but there was still a lot of Scotch obtainable. The place was kept by a patriot, frequented by a limited set, and here they felt free to talk.

A young sub-lieutenant of the Tank Corps, who had escaped from Dunkirk, landed in France again, escaped to Algeria, turned loose: "I want to be with the first landing party in France. Yes, even if I have a white beard! We're as good as they are, if we get the leadership. I was under de Gaulle at Abbeville, when we retook the dump for a few hours. Then it was tank against tank, and they weren't unbeatable!

"France beaten? Go on! Right here in Algeria, the people hate Boches, Italians, Spaniards, all that lousy murderous fascist gang! Take old man Triboule, for instance. Handy man about the hangars. Sixty-seven years old. He putters around, stinking of booze, shuffling, shuffling, and nobody pays much attention to him. Yet I'll bet he's lost more Italians and planes than any of you flyers accounted for. Yes, sabotage! And he knows what he risks, hard labor at least. How? You know the little copper tubes through which the gas passes to the motors?"

"The feed lines?"

"Whatever you call them. Well, before they accept deliveries and take off, the Italians check everything carefully. The pipes are all right. On the outside. But inside? Acid, you know, a system of his own, fool-proof. For an hour, two hours, the motors turn over smoothly. Our chap is fifteen, twenty thousand feet above the deep blue sea! He sings of home and mother. Then a tiny little thing happens. A little pipe bursts. Last stop! All out—"

"Did some one really tell you that?" Greaver asked him.

"Sure. I get around. I—"

"Then both of you ought to have your tongues cut out." The stout Englishman was white with anger. "It's damn fools like you—"

"We're all friends!"

"Naturally. And a spy, of course, is a guy whom nobody knows, and who wears a big plaque on his lapel, marked, 'Spy.' "

THERE were eight men in the group. A sudden silence fell, and helplessly they stared at each other. Greaver's warning had reminded them of many things, had

thrown a chill over the gathering. The party broke up, Greaver making an appointment to meet Brocart for the interview with the Italian.

"I thought there'd me another fight," Varin said, as they walked toward their hotel through the silent, dark streets. "That kid was sore."

"He's an awful ass to talk so freely."

"Righto. Who knows who's who, these days?" Varin laughed shortly. "I would not trust my own brother. By the way, I read in the papers that he is an ardent Laval partisan. My old man did not approve of my opinions, either."

"Did you manage to see the guy this afternoon?"

"About getting forged papers to slip into Morocco? Yes. He says he's willing to sell us anything we want, but can't guarantee results. The customs and the police are getting smart and check up carefully. We better try under our right names, in uniform. Otherwise, they might pin something on us. And they don't kid now. They'll slap you with two years in prison as casually as you'd drink a glass of water."

"Bad business," Brocart admitted. "Anyway, I'll probably be jugged for meeting my Italian—there's a law against duels—but it will be some satisfaction."

"Bah," Varin declared. "The political police will get wind of it, prevent anythink like a duel. Did you notice that Greaver started it, and that you'll have to finish it?"

"What do you mean by that?" Brocart asked.

"Think a bit—he's British, you know, and any little mess that'll cause trouble between us and the Italians is all right with him."

This was logical, but it grated on Brocart oddly. The words were strange, coming from Varin, who intended to join the British. Then he laughed. Suspicion was in the air, all right, when he misunderstood a trifling word of warning by an old friend.

He had quite forgotten the remark when he met Greaver at eleven o'clock the following day. They waited for Javarone on a café terrace. The Italian officer appeared at the exact time, did not shake hands, but sat down with his felt hat held on his lap. When the waiter came for his order, there was a moment of embarrassment. They could not drink together. Then Javarone ordered a vermouth, which he left untouched.

"I am very sorry," he started, "my colleague is not well." His fair skin showed a swift flush. "Change of diet, of water, who knows? He served in Ethiopia, and has spells of fever. I have come to ask you for a delay."

"How long, Captain?"

"A week, ten days."

"It would be simpler for him to apologize."

Brocart was about to speak and waive the formality when Greavor reminded him with a glance that it was his part to listen, not to speak. Javarone smiled.

"In my opinion, the apology is due by your principal, sir." The smile steadied, he looked from one to the other. Whatever really ailed Captain Moccia did not affect this fellow. "If your impatience is too overwhelming, gentlemen, I offer myself as a substitute, a proxy. While I am not as capable as my colleague, I should endeavor to represent him to your satisfaction."

That's what he came for, Brocart thought. The other guy has the wind up, is nervous, and this chap is covering for him. So he checked Greaver with a gesture and spoke aloud. "I have no quarrel with you, Captain. I wish for none. Inform your friend, if you please, that when he recovers I shall be at his disposal."

"Thank you, Lieutenant." Javarone appeared disappointed. He rose, laid a coin to pay for the drink he had not touched, strode away.

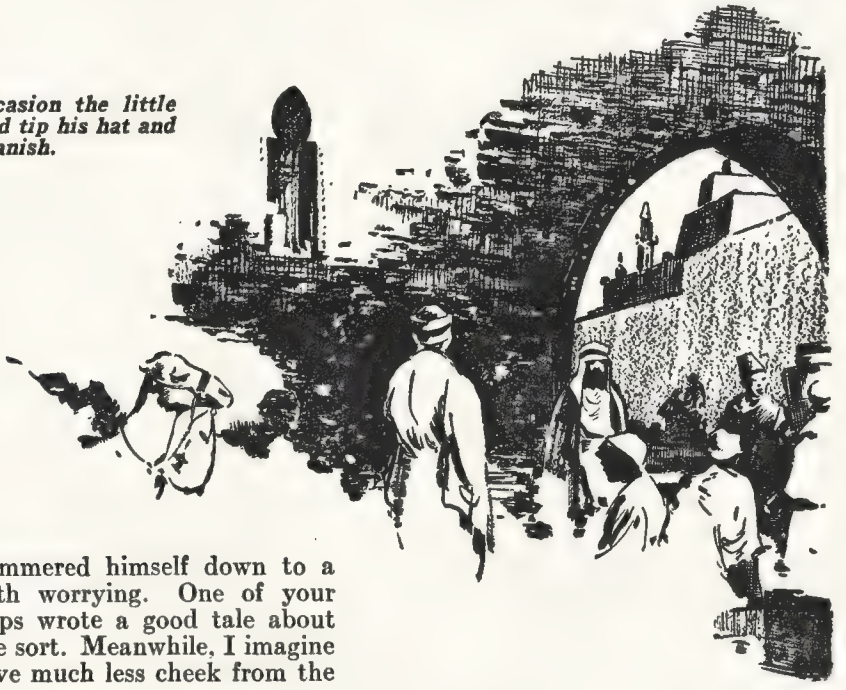
"Well played," Greaver said.

"How, well played?"

"Well, you guessed what probably happened. You were a bit drunk last night, and blew off steam about how sharp you were with the sticker. Those things get around. The little chap is a very imaginative sort of bloke, slept badly. The others, who know very well that everything is known all over town, fear he'll make a show of himself.

"Now, they'll have to bring pressure on him to feel better. And if they do manage to bring him out, he'll apologize, or faint at the first pass, or have hysterics." Greaver reflected a while. "Last night, he'd have been brave enough. But he's simmered himself down to a whisper with worrying. One of your French chaps wrote a good tale about a case of the sort. Meanwhile, I imagine we shall have much less cheek from the Romans!"

He was right.



On each occasion the little captain would tip his hat and vanish.

ALTHOUGH a city of close to two hundred thousand, Oran has a very centralized business district. Brocart met Moccia on the streets, in cafés, three, four times a day. On each occasion, the little captain would tip his hat and vanish. Greaver and his friends had spread the news, and very soon, people would stare at Moccia when Brocart entered a café or a restaurant. Once or twice there was laughter and mild applause.

Brocart found himself a sort of champion of the population against the representatives of the bloodless victors. The "gag" must have become very tedious to the members of the Armistice Commission. Bets were made that the head of the Italian Commission would be forced to send Captain Moccia home to put an end to the scandal. An officer wearing Abyssinian and Spanish Campaign decorations could not be allowed to beat a hasty retreat at the sight of a youthful aviator.

Brocart was finishing breakfast, a few days later, in the dining-room of his hotel, when a beefy, red-faced man in wrinkled civilian clothes dropped on a chair beside him.

"Lieutenant Brocart, Raymond?"

"In person."

"I regret to inform you that you are in custody."

"Again?"

"What do you mean, again?"

"I was arrested in France. I was arrested when I landed here. In fact, I'm still under open arrest. What is it this time?"

"I wouldn't know. Please follow me."

Brocart paid for a cab down to the Prefecture Building, nearer the port. He did not need to be told that this time he was not in charge of the military police, but of the *Sureté Generale,* the Secret Service. A man as burly as the first, but better dressed, received him

in a small, shabby room, furnished with filing-cases, a desk, two chairs. The dusty windows filtering the light caused the place to resemble an aquarium. Brocart sat down, answered questions concerning his identity, his age, his military record.

"Why am I arrested?" he asked at last.

"Arrested? There is a misunderstanding. Our men jump at conclusions." The chap linked two fat hands, like intertwining frankfurter sausages. "I simply wanted to speak to you about an affair, a slight incident, between a member of the Italian Commission and yourself. Tell me about it."

Brocart complied, the other nodding in agreement.

"Yes, yes. I see. Quite right. I understand. It was a temptation. However, the matter is causing public gossip. It annoys the head of the commission. We must try to please him. He has got in touch with us unofficially. We must all collaborate to maintain order and as much good feelings as are possible under the circumstances. He informs us that he has refused Captain Moccia permission to settle the matter, because he is a valuable technical expert."

"Captain Javarone is not an expert?"

"On the contrary," the inspector of police said. "He is a very well-known aviation engineer in civil life. Why?"

"Because his chief would allow *him* to meet me."

The official smiled broadly, his manner changed.

"Of course, we understand perfectly. Captain Moccia suffers from what we politely call a liquid funk. But his chief cannot admit that publicly by sending him away. Which brings us to the poin

my young friend. Would you do us a great favor by leaving town?"

"Where am I to go, monsieur?"

"Oh, anywhere. Would you like to visit South America?" The Secret Service agent laughed. "The important thing is that you should not be seen around here, depreciating Dante, Garibaldi, Mussolini, Moccia!"

"I need papers to travel, a passport."

"We have a fine collection of them, to suit all tastes, for all ages, all colors, all sexes." Seeing that Brocart would not be stubborn about remaining in Oran, the agent was becoming jovial. "Where would you like to go, aside from belligerent countries?"

"I'm an army officer—"

"We'll have your demobilization papers here in thirty minutes."

"I don't want that. Could I—" Brocart hesitated. "Could I go to Morocco?"

"Of course. You have to go there to go anywhere. Because it would never do to send you to Tunisia, where their prestige is so feeble already!" The inspector passed one hand over his forehead, as if inspired. "You say you'd like to remain in the army?"

"Yes. You see, I still hope that—"

"We all hope so, really. But what can we do, with the knife on our throat? But if you stay in the army, the matter is simple. Merely a question of having the Army transfer you to some squadron in Morocco. Would you like something near Casablanca?" He pushed a button on his desk, a clerk appeared, to whom he gave instructions. "Your mission orders," he turned to Brocart again, "transportation papers, and so on, will be at your hotel at three. You can take the night express for Oujda and be in Casablanca in twenty-four hours."

"I have a friend, who came from France with me, and—"

"Lieutenant Varin. Yes. But we cannot do that, as there are too many inactive officers in Morocco already." Brocart felt that this was final, did not insist. The official paced the room, halted near the aviator, touched his crosses. "You'll probably want to collect more. Oh, I know, I know what you want to do. I could even tell you where you want to go. Well, in my position, I cannot tell you what to do. But I can tell you what not to do.

"Do not, under any conditions, board a small boat in Morocco, unless the passengers are well-armed and outnumber the crew. Shun even small steamers of neutral nations. People know fugitives have money with them. Do not cross the Spanish Zone of Morocco, even in disguise, or board a plane stopping anywhere in Spain. Spain is neutral, but overrun by the enemy's agents. Do not trust your best friend, do not tell anyone your plans. Wish you luck, young man, and the first enemy you bring down, dedicate it to Inspector Bastide!"

Varin accepted the news better than Brocart had expected. At the train, that night, he clasped his hand warmly. "I'll join you inside two weeks. It's a bet."

CHAPTER IV

ONE MAN TOO MANY

LIEUTENANT BROCART, flying officer in good standing, pilot in a squadron of reconnaissance Potez 63, was nevertheless arrested ten days after his arrival in Morocco.

This time the charges were firm, definite: complicity in the attempted theft of government property with a view to desertion. He was one of nine pilots arrested in one batch, and that official phrase, "with a view to desertion," aroused gentle mirth among them. However, they were in a serious plight, for Morocco was a territory in state of siege, and the whim of a court-martial might send them into fortress-confinement for periods ranging up to six years.

The whole thing occurred in the most natural fashion. Brocart found the majority of the young pilots in Morocco eager to have a chance at the Nazis. The morale of the aviation was untouched. The French land forces might feel that they had been outmaneuvered, smashed up—but in the air, one against ten or twelve, with inferior machines, the French flyers had proved their superiority as human material.

Casablanca was a gay city still, de-

spite many restrictions. Butter and fatty substances might be scarce, but somehow the supply of bottled goods lasted. The aviation, known to be anti-Vichy for the majority, was popular. The French inhabitants of Morocco were all for throwing their lot with Great Britain, even the Sultan was openly pro-British. The European settlers knew that if a peace treaty had to be made with a victorious Germany, they would lose everything. For Morocco had been coveted by the Germans for fifty years, its possession had almost caused war two or three times, back in 1906, in 1911.

The Nazis would claim part of Morocco, Spain the rest, and the mass deportations of Poles and Lorrainers showed just how much tact would be used in North Africa. So many of the wealthier civilians opened their hearts and their purses to the gallant lads who wished to escape.

Brocart, within a few hours of reporting, found several colleagues who made plans for a dash to Gibraltar. Gibraltar was on every tongue, it was the Promised Land. Many successes encouraged the attempts. It was known that although there was an Italian Armistice Commission in Casa to check up and exact deliveries of planes, not one had landed safely in Italy, while very few days passed without report of some French machines landing safely with the British.

The local government made all possible efforts to prevent this. The planes, the fields, were guarded by detachments of infantry. No pilot was permitted to take a plane off the ground without a special, direct order, and then the machine would not have enough fuel to go very far. Pilots, however, had to be allowed to fly, to keep up the efficiency of the force. The superb, new American machines, Martins and Curtisses, which had been found on the docks of Casa, crated and useless, when they had been so needed in France, were watched with particular care. Routine flights were made in older ships of French manufacture.

A senior pilot, Lieutenant Bourzel, informed his friends, which included Brocart, that he was instructed to take up an Amiot 340 Bomber on a certain afternoon, with one co-pilot. He was to check the reassembled motors in a fairly long flight, a triangle, Casa-Mogador-Marrakesh-Casa, without landing. Bourzel was trusted for the trip because he had a wife and two children in Morocco, and his father had important interests in Occupied France.

"I was reminded of the facts," he explained to his friends. "Neat blackmailing scheme. But I am sure that no one in Morocco is dirty enough to do anything to Charlotte and the kids for what I do, and as for my father, he admired German efficiency and discipline so long and so much that a little fine may do him good. I can take four chaps aside from the co-pilot."

There were so many volunteers that lots had to be drawn. Brocart was lucky. Armed with pencil and paper, others besieged Bourzel to be taken along, proving that as the machine would not carry bombs nor a complete supply of fuel, three additional men, averaging one hundred and sixty pounds

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in weight, could be taken along.

"It will be crowded—"

"What the hell—it's only a few hours—"

"See here, I can take seven aside from myself. No more."

The plans were discussed, every detail covered. Naturally, no one save the men assigned to fly the machine could wear flying suits. No one could bring any baggage of any sort. The passengers were to remain around the buildings at one end of the field, act as casual as possible. Bourzel would start the motors, pretend to have some trouble with them, taxi back toward the hangars. He would halt the machine at a spot one hundred and fifty meters from the main building. The waiting men could start running at a signal from the co-pilot that all was going as planned, cover the distance in twenty seconds. Climbing in would be very quick, as each man was assigned a place in which to squat. Bourzel would allow precisely forty-five seconds for the halt, then no matter who was there, who was not, he would start off at full power.

"Now, if you guys want to keep your heads, don't come heading into the props," he finished. "The nearest sentry will be a good three hundred meters away, and will hesitate to shoot. It's a European battalion on duty tomorrow."

THEY were all pleased with that news. Native soldiers with orders to shoot under certain conditions never hesitate, while a Frenchman would. Four, five seconds of doubt, of wondering, in the sentry's mind, would make much difference. Once the plane was in the air, it had little to fear from an ordinary Lebel slug.

All had every hope of success. There was enough fuel to reach Gibraltar, and to spare. Bourzel insisted that the motors would develop a greater speed than the indicated two hundred and ninety-five per hour for that type. The pursuit planes from the field could not catch up. And they could swerve wide of the coast, fly very high, and avoid interception by some of the Rabat ships.

At the appointed time, the mechanics rolled the Amiot out, Bourzel boarded it with his co-pilot. He went through the usual check-up, rolled far into the field, stopped the engines, started them. Everything appeared normal. The major commanding had come out to watch the start, was smoking a cigarette.

Brocart could see only three of the "escapists." They were dressed carelessly. He himself wore an old pair of uniform pants, sneakers, and a thick pull-over sweater of dingy white wool, with a high-school letter stitched over the front.

Bourzel pushed back the hood, gestured toward the mechanics, started the engines, turned the big machine about slowly, and came rolling at reduced speed. The co-pilot tossed something white to the ground. Running silhouettes materialized from various spots, one hopping out of a low window, raced for the plane.

Brocart was there among the first, clambered up, slid into the rear of the cockpit. Others piled in, laughing and swearing, elbowing, kneeing. It was somewhat cramped, because human bodies have more jutting angles than vombs. The motors crashed out full strength, the Amiot gathered speed.

Brocart was elated, felt the jarring of the bouncing, whirling wheels lessening. The machine was lifting, was off—and all started to shout.

Then there was a hard impact, another, tumbling the crowded men upon one another, followed by a long, dreadful second of dizziness, as the plane spun about. And in that second, Brocart felt his scalp crawl, imagined he heard the crackling of flames. But he was wrong, Bourzel had switched off the ignition. His voice sounded strangely clear in the sudden silence.

"Who's the damn fool—" followed by a string of curses.

For there was an extra man, a ninth man. Bourzel, trying to take her off in a cross-wind, had miscalculated, slapped down heavily. Perhaps the additional one hundred and fifty-four pounds of the shame-faced youth who was picking his bruised limbs out of the tangle, had made the difference. Perhaps not.

The co-pilot, who had hopped onto the wing, reported.

"Might as well come out, fellows. The right wing's smashed. And here comes the welcoming committee!"

The bomber was surrounded by khaki-clad, helmeted troopers, clutching rifles, panting. A lieutenant, very angry, was waving a long-barreled pistol, and behind him was the field commander, puffing and red. He grumbled as Bourzel alighted. "Clumsy oaf!"

The nine culprits were placed on a truck and taken to a sort of camp on the outskirts of Casablanca, near the Black Rocks. They were quartered in plank sheds, and were comfortable enough, but the sentries were tough, selected men, and the barbed wire showed the place was a prison. There were many others there, not all of them aviators. One man, a beardless naval ensign, had been caught starting out in a rowboat, and accused of intending to reach Europe.

The food was poor, the tobacco supply limited, but by the same miracle which had held true everywhere Brocart had been since the Armistice, bottled goods could be had for cash. He found there two men he had known at Rochemaure. The Alsatian, Westermann, was one of them. He was demobilized, kicked out of the army, but held on a technicality because he had tried to leave for Portugal on a forged passport. He avoided speaking to Brocart, and seemed very gloomy.

Belote, the popular French card game, was played fiercely, hour after hour. The few books, magazines and newspapers available were passed from hand to hand until in tatters. Brocart came across a startling item in the *Echo de l'Oranie,* dated four days after his departure.

> Our clever police today arrested Triboule, Baptiste, age 68, sweeper at the airport. The man is accused of numerous acts of sabotage on machines in the hangars. He confessed readily all that was asked of him, and does not appear to possess all his good sense. The growing hysteria of our police in their wish to please the foreign agents has led to some very comical developments. Yesterday, it was a harmless British refugee, guilty of professing loyalty to the land of his birth. Today, it is a senile, harmless workman. Tomorrow, the editor of this newspaper probably will be accused of causing the plane wrecks.

The days passed slowly, two, three. Opinions among the accused were divided. Some were confident of acquittal, others feared the worst. The pro-Vichy press was asking for a severe example to end the scandal once and for all, evoked the Decree of June 28th, stipulating the death penalty. No one imagined anything so severe, but after all, their intention of deserting had been evident, and a government machine costing a few million francs had been wrecked.

ON THE fourth day, Brocart was surprised by a call to report at the office. He found Varin waiting for him, as slender, as smooth as ever. "Thirteen days, as I arrived last night. I win the bet," he said. "I had a job finding you, until I heard about that crash. I knew then where you were. How did I make it? As easily as you did. After you left, I had time to look around, met some local civilians. One evening, a woman tells me her husband is in Morocco, an aviator, and is crazy to get home. We exchange letters, I went to the Staff, and I was transferred here in his place. That's the normal routine, and we'd forgotten it!"

"When did you last see Greaver?"

"Soon after you left. I don't speak much English, so I was out of place in the bunch. Lucky for me. They pinched Greaver—had connections with some bird in a radio firm, and they were using a set to report departures to the British cruisers outside Oran. They won't do much to him, just deport him as an undesirable alien at the first opportunity. Look here, there were too many on that stunt of yours. I'll try to get you out, in open arrest of course, and see what we can do."

"How can you?"

"Influence. My brother's been given an important adjustment job in Occupied France."

Only Bourzel remained in actual prison after five days. The others were sent

back to their formations, although forbidden town liberty. Brocart often envied Varin, whose slate was clean for the present, and who went to Casa every night. According to him, he had found a beautiful lady, half-Spanish, half-Moorish, who refused him nothing.

Brocart meanwhile was learning many things about French North African affairs that changed some of his views. Like many others, he had been indignant that General de Nogues had refused to join England. He learned that the general had issued a statement in June, at the time of the Armistice, that he would refuse to surrender any war material to the Axis, and resist invasion. Then he had yielded.

That seemed cowardly, as North Africa mustered several hundred thousand soldiers, well-trained, with some field artillery. The uninformed said that these should be used to attack Libya. But the facts were that these soldiers had very few tanks, and those of old models, very few anti-tank guns, and those of a caliber proved ineffective against modern armor in France. Moreover, the ammunition had been foreseen for a campaign against native tribes. Against organized troops, mechanized divisions, the artillery ammunition available would be expended in a fortnight, the small-arms ammunition in a month.

There was no hope of obtaining additional ammunition from France, for even if Vichy had been willing, the Nazis occupied most of the factories. There were no manufacturing plants in North Africa, and neither England nor the United States could guarantee to supply shells and cartridges. There were many planes and more pilots, but only a limited supply of gasoline.

On the other hand, there was a great threat to French Morocco. It was known that the Spaniards had put several mechanized and motorized divisions in their Moroccan holdings, and that there was at least one German mechanized division, the famous Condor. It was superbly equipped; its men were veterans of the Civil War in Spain, of Poland and France. Germany had asked for occupation of a belt of land through France as far as the Spanish border, which meant continuous transportation facilities.

If French Morocco had gone openly for Britain, those forces would have attacked. The French divisions could not have resisted long without proper equipment. It would have been a repetition of Flanders, and worse. The enemy's mechanized troops would have stabbed through them to Casablanca, to Fez, to Meknes. And at the first serious French defeat in the country, the mountain tribes would have attacked from the south.

A Morocco held by Germany would have given the enemy a very long strip of coast, as far as Senegal; ports for submarine bases, for raiding cruisers; flying fields from which long-range bombers would have soared to bomb British and neutral shipping in the Atlantic, especially the vessels which were routed around the Cape of Good Hope because the Suez Canal was unsafe.

By staying neutral, Morocco achieved much good. The Germans were unwilling to risk the venture, due to their efforts against England, but if challenged and compelled, would have made the most of the situation.

"The German's game, and the pro-Nazi-French game," Varin explained, "is to keep Morocco without fighting for it. They hope that Britain will repeat the mistake of Oran."

"No danger of that," Brocart said confidently. "The British have even allowed ships to pass through Gibraltar, merchantmen escorted by cruisers."

He was wrong.

A COUPLE of days later, Great Britain made the mistake desired of her. The first news, that given out officially, was that a British Squadron of warships had bombarded Dakar, in Senegal, without warning. But many people listened to clandestine radio broadcasts, and the real facts were soon known: General de Gaulle had tried a landing, with eight thousand Free French troopers. The Governor of Senegal had refused to allow him to come ashore, had fired upon the first boats. A French submarine had

left the harbor, hit a British cruiser with a torpedo, then been sunk herself. The ships had then shelled the town.

Brocart wanted to fight Germany, knew that blunders were unavoidable when a nation fought deperately for existence. But he understood that many Frenchmen, even among those who had been ardently pro-British, were infuriated by the news. Emotions deeply rooted in all men were stirred by the incident. Men of their blood had been killed, mangled. Great Britain might be justified; nevertheless, British shells had snuffed out French lives.

An official order from the Vichy Government was posted in all units' messrooms: The Moroccan aviation was ordered to make a retaliation raid upon Gibraltar. There was no choice left to those involved. An order is an order.

"If you try to get out of it," Varin told Brocart, "it will be very bad. Much more serious than your other offense, you know. A refusal to obey. Moreover, if you are still of the same mind, we may have a chance to crash somewhere." And when Brocart protested, he added: "I'll pilot the plane, there'll be a bombardier. You can handle the machine guns, that's defensive."

"That's quibbling—"

"All right. Don't quibble. Go and see the major, tell him you absolutely refuse to carry out the orders, and see where you land. You'll probably be still rotting in prison when the show's over, four or five years from now."

This was the truth. Not only Brocart but a hundred others realized it. They had no enthusiasm for the task. However, there was a type of flyer who liked the thought of the raid—the young fellows who had never had a chance to fight in France, who wanted to prove themselves, who liked the thought of a dangerous undertaking.

It is certain that the authorities were aware of this, for those eager youths were assigned to the best machines, the newly assembled American bombers. Brocart noticed that a number of veterans of the French front picked the task he had, machine gunner. And their ratings as officers would have entitled them to a more active participation. The machines were rolled out on the field, and the crews slowly filed out to them.

The Potez were to start first, and were disposed in echelons of nine. After them were the Amiots, on which Varin and his crew belonged. Then would come the new machines. Brocart knew that at the same moment, at a dozen fields in Morocco, men and machines were about to start for Gibraltar, the dreamed-of-goal, with an unexpected mission. He felt also that it would be a useless gesture, as raids by the Italians had proved that the fortress could not be harmed greatly from the air.

But a sensation of deep anguish gripped him. This meant, perhaps, the start of a war against England. He would have a choice to make, and he knew that the choice was made. His trip on foot, among the refugees in France, had instilled something unknown in his soul, hatred. Always, over the Maginot Line, he had felt regret at taking lives, a vague remorse had marred his sense of victory.

He would never feel that way again, where Boches were involved. They had machine-gunned him on the ground. They had killed that woman, they had torn the arm off that baby, who had bled to death while he was lying unconscious. He had to fight those men again, to free his soul from rancor. He had to get even. The thirst for vengeance had become as keen as physical thirst.

CHAPTER V

RAID ON THE ROCK

THE bombardier said: "I'll soon dump these somewhere." He was a short, muscular lieutenant, twenty-six or seven. "But some of the kids on the small planes say they'll dive on the ships. Good luck to them, I say! Those British naval gunners are good. I saw them in Norway. The British weren't so good on land there, but there was nothing the matter with their sailors."

"How did you happen to get back here, Lurchon?"

"Flew from Narvik to Scotland, from Scotland to France. I was on the front about June seventh. On the twenty-first,

when I saw things were over, I headed for Africa." He laughed. "Landed in Algiers, and slept in jail for four nights! Funny thing, if the British drop me, it won't be the first time. I'm from Lille, you know, and I was a baby in the last war. A British bomb, supposedly meant for the railroad station, blew out the front of our house—and knocked me out of bed. That was in 1918."

The first squadrons were taking off, in orderly fashion, and the din of engines filled the air. While Brocart had no liking for the job ahead, he felt a certain excitement, a tenseness of all his being.

"All right—" Varin called.

Brocart and Lurchon climbed into the machine. Brocart gained the rear seat, looked over the machine guns. Then he buckled on his helmet, plugged in for radio. The machine was shaking, as Varin cranked his engine, listened for trouble a moment. The line of planes ahead rolled, leaped into space. The Amiot accelerated, the wheels cleared the ground, and it slashed smoothly through the air.

"All right, Five— Bear left, Dupont—" the voices started.

Brocart tested his machine guns briefly. Lurchon said something to Varin about sixty-kilogs bombs and chuckled. The pilot replied: "You said it."

"How long to get there?"

"An hour and ten minutes in this wind."

The ocean shimmered beneath them already. The flat coast rolled eastward. Brocart liked to fly with Varin. The fellow was a good pilot, and flowed, did not jerk. He wondered whether the planes from the fields at Meknes and Fez, which were probably included in this raid, would meet opposition soaring above the Spanish Zone. Probably not, as the authorities there must have been informed in advance, and knew their destination.

Brocart tried to figure the percentage of men in this expedition who went reluctantly. Until the bombardment of Dakar, ninety per cent of French flyers in Morocco were pro-British in sentiment, sixty per cent would have liked to join them in their struggle to defend London. London—only yesterday, the radio had announced that the British Museum had been hit by a bomb. The German Propaganda service had broadcast the weight of metal and explosives dropped on Britain—twenty-five thousand tons!

His thoughts resumed the track. Now, with the aroused feeling against England, the pro-British probably had dropped to sixty per cent, those who would have joined them to thirty-five per cent. Those percentages did not make much sense, but they helped pass the time. On the right, he could discern two sprawling masses of houses, divided by a stream. Rabat and Sale, already! Thirty-five per cent— If one figured the actual number of men that represented, it was about three hundred. Three hundred reluctant men, who wished to do no harm, hurtling at from two hundred and fifty to three hundred miles an hour. Some of the bombers carried eight sixty-kilogs bombs, some more. The big fellows had bigger bombs.

Two ships on the ocean, far below, foreshortened, resembled toys. Two merchantmen. Probably Spanish or Portuguese, so near the coast. Bound for Lisbon, probably, the one open port. And just as probably carrying refugees to that port, where they would swelter and weep, waiting for a chance to go farther, to Cuba, to the States, to South America, around the world, to China. To China, where other planes were speeding across the sky toward other objectives, planes piloted by yellow men.

There were people on the decks of those ships, on the bridges, and they would be wondering at the number of planes overhead, sending out the news, causing alarm. Gibraltar would hear, and be on the alert. The gunners would be called, would group around the guns. Brocart remembered an illustration of a British anti-aircraft gun on a battleship, with the picturesque name: Chicago-Piano. Well, in an hour, in less, he'd learn the tune they played.

If he had not been a fool, back in Oran, if he had asked for demobilization, passage to Lisbon, he could be on one of those ships now. Many people would want to be on them. Westermann, for

instance, who fought for France, whose father fought for Germany, whose grandfather fought for France, and who was now cast out by both countries. Half-Jewish, that was the accusation. Suppose he, Brocart, was in a like situation because he was of mixed blood, half-French, half-American?

The son of an Angevin Frenchman, fond of good food and good wines, light-hearted, frivolous outside business hours; and of an American mother, born in New England, prim and gentle, so kind as to be a sucker, yet courageous in a question of principle, courageous as a lioness. Brocart laughed. He remembered his mother's arguments with Frenchwomen concerning the quality of milk to be fed babies; the use of wine, even diluted, by children under fourteen! They liked her, but they thought her a bit crazy.

An exchange of compliments. Frenchmen said "crazy American," Americans said "crazy Frenchman." He, Brocart, was both.

HE HEARD Lurchon finish a sentence: "Might as well drop oranges."

Brocart recalled the first part—the bombardier didn't think that his bombs would do much harm to Gibraltar. Neither did Brocart for that matter. He recalled a description from a school textbook: "A huge mass of primary gray marble." That was Gibraltar, a huge mass of primary gray marble. Not much sense dropping bombs on stone. There was the town, but that wasn't a military objective. There were the ships, but the ships were hard to hit. And they had pianos, Chicago-Pianos. Sixty-kilogs bombs on a mass of primary gray marble —that was silly.

"Where are we?"

"That was Port-Lyautey, on the right. Just passed it."

Lyautey, Marshal Lyautey, the great man, the conqueror of Morocco. There, not far behind, was a whole town named after him. Well, he, Brocart, had met Lyautey. He had shaken hands with him, when he was a small boy, and recalled only a dry old man with a mustache and a wry set to his head, grumbling platitudes: "Bright little man—how far are you in school?" That's what happened when one met great men. There was another general, now dead also, who sucked his soup out of the spoon, and belched without begging anyone's pardon.

"The Martins are over the place—" a voice reported in the phone. "Anti-aircraft fire very scattered."

Brocart knew that the news was out now, all over the world, that powerful dynamos had shouted it to the universe. The French are bombing Gibraltar. Extraordinary news, extraordinary news. They were hearing it in America, and the afternoon papers would have big, greasy headlines: *FRENCH BOMB GIBRALTAR*. And his American friends would wonder how he felt about it, never realizing that he was one of the bombers.

French bomb Gibraltar—it wasn't the first time. It was an old, old story. The French were bombing Gibraltar in 1704, again in 1727, and in 1779, in 1782! That last time, they had used something new, floating batteries. It was reasonable to suspect that when they had withdrawn then they had not expected to remain away from such good sport for one hundred and fifty-eight years, and that they would return on the wing, sixteen thousand feet high!

The British had held on. The British always held hard. They were holding on now, with four, five hundred planes raining bombs by the ton, with a thousand, two thousand planes dropping bombs. Hard to make them let go of anything. All the guts in the world and a narrowly circumscribed sense of humor. How long did it take America to make them let go? Eight solid years, and Saratoga, Yorktown. Tough people, primary gray marble!

The Germans could bite, too. But they slashed, like a wolf, they didn't hang on like a bulldog. Britain was being slashed, mangled, but was waiting, waiting for the right grip, on the throat. Perhaps the naval blockade was that grip. Not very showy, but it worked. In the preceding war, it had brought down the wolf. It was functioning in this show, for when a German ship was reported on the ocean, it made headlines!

The ocean was on the left side now,

and they were speeding over land. Tangier must be somewhere ahead, and eight miles farther, less than two minutes' flight, was Gibraltar.

The ocean was beautiful, like a rich, irregular mossaic, gray, blue, green, gold, interlaced in superb patterns. That was because of the clouds forming a canopy. The sun was flooding through the rifts, shooting slanting pillars of burnished gold down to the sea. The clouds were white and bluish above, gray and purple below. And there was a big ship steaming below, a ship of war, scuttling like a cockroach swimming in a plate of soup. Brocart knew that it was big, for the slim craft darting like arrows must be destroyers.

"Attention all. Keep formation. Watch for signals."

"Understood," Varin said, automatically. Other voices checked in, there was a confused muttering in the phones. Brocart scanned the sky for a moment, west and south, then swung his turret to face forward.

His plane was on the right tip of the formation of nine Amiot bombers. In the far distance to the north, the sun was sparkling on other squadrons. There were planes everywhere, to the right and left, behind and before. There must have been over a hundred in sight, at that moment.

Brocart looked down, and sudden, unreasoned excitement almost stifled him. Spread like a map below lay North Africa, and the tip of Europe, with Spain widening into vague space toward the horizon. And that insignificant hillock was Gibraltar!

Brocart had seen it before, both from the sea and from the air. Once, his parents had taken him on a visit to the States by the southern route. And twice, flying between Oran and Port Vendres, his army formation had swung within sight of it. But a place that you passed by and one you were about to bomb could not seem the same.

THE MACHINE started to glide down. Varin was obeying signals now, and so far as this squadron was concerned, the radio was silent. Brocart swept the sky. He did not want to fire on the British, but he did not want to die.

He saw no "enemy" machine. Yet there were pursuit machines at Gibraltar, and more on the fleet's carriers. There were a number of vessels inside the military port, some of them evidently large warships, super-dreadnoughts or battle cruisers. Brocart had heard on the radio one mention of them: "Vessels have opened fire." That had been six or seven minutes ago. But there was no flicker of flame from them. Elsewhere, at wide intervals, shells were bursting. Bursting with a swift flash, then a casual blossoming of smoke. Unless you were right among them, anti-aircraft explosions seemed ornamental rather than useful.

Gibraltar was much nearer as the plane slid down, jutting like a molar tooth at the end of a continent, hung by a string from Europe. The fortress was not fighting back, seemed to wait placidly for the annoying gnats to sting harmlessly and go away. Possibly, the attack had really surprised the British —Flanders had proved that they could be surprised, as had Norway —and the London government had been asked for orders.

The fortress squatted there, at the gateway of the Atlantic, powerless to stop planes, but still a plug choking Britain's foes. The giant guns in the galleries bored through the stone—primary gray marble—commanded the straits today as, two centuries ago and more, long bronze cannon had dominated the sailing ships.

The Amiots slid far above Gibraltar, continued their slanting descent. Lurchon had his eyes on Varin, just ahead of him, who had his eyes on the squadron commander ahead of him. They were beyond the sheer drop of the southern face of the Rock now. The bombs started to fall. There was an airfield below, quite a spacious stretch; there were even rows of ships here and there. But there were also anti-aircraft guns, and they started to flash, exploding fifteen hundred or two thousand feet below the wheels of the bombers.

And the whole formation lifted higher. Brocart knew that the guns could have plopped their shells much nearer. This

was a combat without conviction on either side, a useless demonstration. Yet, perforce, a number of human beings would die because of it. This slaughter of a few, on the margin of the immense massacre, seemed the more horrible for being so casual. To Brocart's imagination, it seemed to mock patriotism and common sense.

The ghastly acceptance by human beings of the "token" slayings of their kind unnerved him more than the most intense action, the most savage bombardment would have. It was almost as if the British below were saying: "We pulled a boner at Dakar, and you're sore because you're hurt. I'll wait until you calm down and see if you still want to sock me."

The squadrons sped on, and explosions dotted the soil below. Brocart was too high to discern any details. He felt the ship lift, as Varin responded to the signal. Looking back, he saw another squadron following, saw the glitter of the falling bombs in the sunlight.

They swung westward, into the glowing sky. There were many ships straight below, and in the military port, now to his left, he saw splashes and smoke. There was smoke also on the slope of the city. Some of the missiles must have struck there. A fratricidal combat, the third: Mers-el-Kebir, Dakar, Gibraltar.

The squadron turned southwest, the sun caught redly on the hood. Brocart smiled as he remembered one of his thoughts, as the bombs were falling from this machine: Suppose he leaped out, and came down by parachute? What would have been the result?

He imagined his greeting the British soldiers: "I really wanted to join you, and this was the only way I could manage it."

They would have been startled. Or perhaps not. Some Ferson or other would have nodded, smiled and said: "Quite all right. Would you like a drink?"

TWO DAYS later there was another raid on Gibraltar. This time Brocart was not included. The poor results of the first raid had displeased Vichy, it seemed, and fewer planes, manned by volunteers, participated. The flyers returned elated, feeling that Oran and Dakar had been avenged. They had succeeded in damaging some large ship in the harbor, had sunk smaller craft. But this time, the British defenders had really fought back in earnest.

The French did not report their casualties, and the British were careful to avoid mentioning having brought down planes. The two nations were quivering on the edge of a war. It was considered best to keep deaths quiet, to wait for time to heal the breach. Brocart thought, before long, that the raids had been necessary—the German conquerors had to be given a physical proof that Vichy-France was not helping Britain secretly.

Then came his summons to appear before the court-martial. It was a public hearing, and the long room was crowded. Brocart noticed that there was a bust of the French Republic, a stern-faced buxom young lady, in the place of honor. He had heard that such busts had been removed from the court-rooms of France.

There was a colonel presiding, three junior officers and a civil magistrate, as provided by regulations. A lean, sleek staff captain acted as prosecutor. He did an excellent job, pointed out the cost of the mishap, the possible consequences to France if the Nazis saw that such acts remained unpunished.

"There might be horrible reprisals upon the civilian population. Whether just or not, that is the fact. At the whim of the victors, innocent people might pay for the romantic foolishness of these young men. War is no longer chivalrous—"

"When was it ever?" asked the colonel presiding, calmly. "Charlemagne, uncle of the Paladin Roland, deported the Saxons to Belgium. Please keep to facts."

This embarrassed the prosecutor. He finished hurriedly, stating that he did not ask for the death penalty, nor even for hard labor. Six years' fortress-confinement for the leader, from six months to three years for his accomplices, according to the degree of their guilt. The defender rose, wiped his pince-nez, and

started to mumble. At the first pause, Lieutenant Bourzel rose, asking permission to address the court.

"Granted."

"I refuse to hide behind technicalities and quibbling, and I am sure that my comrades share my feelings," he said. "Yes, we intended to take the machine to Gibraltar and surrender it to the British. I have members of my family here, whom I regretted to leave, and others in France, exposed to reprisals. That is the case also for my comrades. But they all felt, as I did, that if their families had been consulted, they would have been willing to take the risks, and if not, that they did not deserve consideration. I'm a Frenchman, and I consider with General de Gaulle that although we have lost one battle, the war still goes on.

"We are not guilty because there was no crime. Since when has it been a crime for Frenchmen to believe that France cannot die, cannot submit? When that is admitted by Frenchmen, France will cease to exist. And no one can commit offenses against what doesn't exist.

"We are perhaps guilty of a crime against the German State. In that case, turn us over for trial to a German court. And, if that court were composed of front-line officers, not of administrative officials or Gestapo agents, I'd wager on our acquittal! We have done what soldiers should do, and our supposed crimes are our best defense before soldiers."

The eight others on the accused bench looked at each other and smiled. This might turn out to be expensive, but no matter, it was the way to talk. Bourzel not only could fly, but he had plenty of nerve with both feet on firm ground!

"If the court is seeking for a precedent to guide its decision, I am happy to supply one, from one of the chivalrous wars referred to by the Prosecutor for the State. From the War of 1870, palmed off upon an unprepared France with a rotten government by that apostolic figure, Bismarck! A war filled with such knightly incidents as the butchery of unarmed peasants at Passavant, the massacre of the civilian population of Bazeilles, the bombardment of Paris. A baby cares little whether it is blown to bits by a cast-iron ball filled with black powder or by a streamlined air bomb filled with explosive derived from picric acid or trinitrotoluol!"

Bourzel paused, resumed: "Time has passed, the Boche is not changed. My precedent? When Marshal Bazaine surrendered his army at Metz, numerous officers ignored his surrender. One of them was Captain de Negrier, who became general. Ten years later, who was right, who was wrong? Was de Negrier ever tried for breaking through the enemy's line, on horseback and in uniform?"

"Gentlemen, this is highly dangerous," the prosecutor shouted. "Reported in certain quarters, it may even delay peace—"

Bourzel turned to face him.

"Their peace may be worse than their war."

Very soon after, the court rose, the military detachment presented arms. Brocart settled himself for a long, anxious wait. He wondered just what qualifications were attributed to him, whether he would be among those who got two years, whether his participation in the raid had been counted. To his amazement, the five judges filed back to their seats inside ten minutes.

This speed seemed ominous. Bourzel had conceded the facts.

"The verdict of the court-martial is unanimous—acquittal!"

CHAPTER VI

BROCART FINDS A SPY

THE field commander could not be harsher than the court. He granted all nine town liberty that night. The verdict was approved by the civilian population, and wherever they showed themselves, they were applauded. There was a warning note in the chorus, though. A thickset old man came to them in a night-club. He was a prosperous businessman, who had started as a sutler for the conquering army in 1908, with a brace of mangy camels and four hundred francs' worth of tinned and bottle goods, which he had developed into great land holdings, farm and forest.

This time the British fought back in earnest.

"You lads better remember that the pro-Vichy people are strong out here—all the future pensioners in the administration are for Laval. And they have sincere followers by now, convinced that we should throw our lot in with the Boches. Now that the court-martial has failed to check desertions to the British, they'll try something direct, tough, as an example. If you try again, I'd advise you to take care your machine guns are loaded."

The young aviators thanked him for the advice, and laughed among themselves. To start with, obtaining ammunition for the machine guns would

have added to the already formidable difficulties of escape, and then they did not believe that French flyers could be found to murder their comrades.

Brocart and his friends were to learn that the old colonial magnate had been right. There is but one consideration for certain men, personal gain. Many of the Frenchmen employed by the government in Morocco wanted to see the end of the chaotic state of affairs, even at the cost of a bad peace with Germany. The Armistice, which had caused immense confusion, might lead to new records, a new system, and they wanted those settled, for the sake of promotion.

And a new type of young military men was starting to shape, men who had become convinced that a close imitation of Nazi racism and ruthlessness was France's only salvation. These appeared even in the aviation. The majority were very young chaps who had not fought against the Germans actively, and had been on the raids to Gibraltar. Others were flyers from the fleet, Bretons who had never held much liking for the British, their ancestral war and commerce rivals, who were bitter about the deaths of their mates.

Nevertheless, the hopes of the Vichy partisans that ordering attacks on British objectives would end desertion to the British did not last long. Two or three ships contrived to get away, and landed at the fortress. Some of the men aboard had participated in the raids. The British evidently understood that they had acted because of discipline and under strong pressure, for they accepted them.

News of successful escapes made Brocart envious, nervous. The radio brought news of great air battles over the Channel and England. Some men managed to win a share of them, and while Brocart deemed himself as smart as the next man, and had more money than most, he seemed nailed to one spot! He had plenty of money now, obtained from a business connection of his father, to be repaid after the war.

Brocart considered assuming some disguise, heading for Tangier, only eight miles from Gib, as a civilian, perhaps even under the cloak of a Moroccan. But the Moroccan guides were said to be as untrustworthy as those of Algeria. And if he was identified as a French officer by the Spanish police, he would be interned. Interned and guarded by chaps with nervous trigger-fingers.

On one occasion, he was about to embark on a tiny Portuguese tramp-steamer. The skipper, a fat, bald-headed fellow, watched the wallet from which Brocart took two British pounds as an advance on his passage. The young man recalled Inspector Bastide's advice in time. Unreported departure, no possible investigation for years, and a man slipped over the side on a dark night made so little splash! He purposely missed that boat.

One consolation was that Bourzel was even worse off than he, for he was under special watch of the political police. His acquittal had brought him into the light and his escape would have been an inspiration to all others.

"No chance for me to get away," Bourzel explained to Brocart. "Not toward Gibraltar, anyway. But I'm due for a trick of duty down south in a few weeks. General de Gaulle is in the Gabon. I think I'll try to make it across the Sahara. Meanwhile, I'm doping out some way of using this spying on me."

Brocart was not tempted by the undertaking. Starting out from Bou Denib, for instance, with just enough gas for a long patrol, one could chance obtaining more fuel at isolated stations far from control. But in case of a slip, it meant death from thirst, slavery among the Mauritanian Moors, or recapture by the French. It needed the steel nerves and the quiet recklessness of a Bourzel to achieve. And in the Gabon, a man would be farther from England.

BOURZEL invited him to his home one evening. While his wife was putting the children to bed, he led Brocart to the terrace of the house. Darkened Casablanca spread before them in the night, ghostly against the dark screen of the ocean. The wind was cool, bracing.

"This is the one place where we can talk without being overheard," Bourzel said. "I didn't want to talk in front

of Adele, because it worries her."

"You have a scheme to get away?" Brocart asked, his heart thumping.

"Sorry, old man, but not for us. But we can help others. You know the emergency field at Ber-Rechid? They have a number of old crates there. There's an obsolete Breguet that will still fly. I was showing some of the chaps in training a few things about it, and I am sure it was reported. Tomorrow, about eleven, I'll get a telephone call from one of the men I know out there. You know every telephone line in Casa is tapped. He'll just make a date to go out tomorrow night, but speak as if he were trying to convey a message.

"I'll get my car to leave the field, as if I was rolling into town to have lunch with my family, as I do often. However, I'll give you a nod, and you'll come along. We were tried together, and our getting together will start suspicion.

"We start, but instead of heading for town, we turn toward Ber-Rechid. That will draw a lot of spies and cops off the field—to report by telephone, to locate cars to follow us. The military sentries will be half-asleep, waiting for the noon relief. You've noticed they start edging toward the canteen early.

"At exactly eleven fifty, four guys get into a Potez, bounce right out of the hangar, and so long! The cops will be following us to Ber-Rechid, where we'll have some lunch, and return. Who can then prove that we knew anything?"

"Will the machine have enough gas to get there?"

"Sure. It'll be ready to take a Treasury official to Agadir at two o'clock. I hope he has to walk!"

"Listen, anybody else will do to go with you," Brocart pleaded. "Can't I go with them?"

"Those birds dug up the information about the plane being made ready today. They were the ones to notice that the agent who watches it is the one who reports on my movements. It's their show. And no extra passenger. You saw what one did to us the last time!"

Brocart went to his quarters at the field with mixed feelings. At one time or other, Brocart had contributed large sums for extra gas, for paying mechanics, for bribes here and there. He believed himself entitled to some return. For a while, he even suspected that Bourzel was holding others back deliberately, so as to be the first of the men acquitted to thumb his nose at the Vichyists.

"Gone to his head, publicity hog," he muttered.

Then his anger passed, and he laughed. He was like a kid, took disappointment hard and imagined enemies everywhere!

He was awakened early the next morning by Varin, who was dousing his head in a basin of cold water, coughing and sputtering.

"Just get in?" he asked.

"Yes. And in thirty minutes, I have to teach the young idea how to fly. New crop, most of them nasty little fascists, who ape the Boche flyers. I'm through about ten-thirty. We'll get a lift to Casa and have lunch at the *Roi de la Bière*."

"Sorry, can't."

"What's up?"

"I'm lunching with Bourzel."

Varin paused and looked at him.

"Dinner last night, lunch today. Well,

Pepsi-Cola is made only by Pepsi-Cola Company, Long Island City, N. Y. Bottled locally by authorized bottlers.

he has a pretty wife," he said, smiling.

He knotted a fresh tie, slipped into his tunic. Brocart walked out with him, crossed the field. There was no one near, the group of students was five hundred meters away. Perhaps childishly, Brocart wanted to clear up the situation.

"It isn't what you think," he started.

He outlined the plan to Varin. He felt he could not do otherwise, because it would be obvious that he, Brocart, had known of the intended escape in advance, and Varin might resent his secretiveness. They roomed together, had been through many tight places side by side, and already Varin seemed a bit aloof, and hurt by Bourzel's great influence over his friend.

"Good luck to them," Varin said, stopping to light a cigarette. "It'll be our turn one of these days. But Bourzel might have let you in on it. You paid for that smuggled gas which the cops seized, didn't you? Forty pounds sterling, wasn't it?"

"Not his fault that they were wasted."

"But at the present exchange, that's sixteen thousand francs. That's putting a nick into you!"

Brocart warmed up to his comrade. Varin understood things as he did. He had been entitled to a chance.

At eleven, a scribe emerged from the administration office, calling out that Bourzel was wanted on the telephone. From that moment, matters progressed as if rehearsed. The plainclothesman at the hangar came out on the apron at the sound of the name. The uniformed gendarmes headed for vantage spots. As he climbed into the roadster beside Bourzel, Brocart saw them gathering, talking. The car rolled away, turned for Ber-Rechid instead of Casa.

Before long, a large automobile was following. Bourzel slowed down, the other slowed down. He speeded, the other speeded.

"Hooked," he said laconically.

He drove at moderate speed until eleven fifty. Then he stopped the car and looked back. Two minutes later, they saw the machine in the air, circling once over the field, then heading northeast. Both started to count the seconds. Two other ships, Bloch 151 pursuits, shot into the air, but a good eleven minutes had elapsed. The Potez led them by about forty miles. The very precautions taken by the authorities against the stealing of planes caused delay and worked in the fugitives' favor.

Even with military priority on the call, the local telephone system would not get Rabat in less than four minutes. The call would have to be relayed to the field. By the time the intercepting ships were up, the Potez would have passed. The radio would not be used, for many planes had been sent on wild goose chases by fake messages.

"The lucky guys," Brocart concluded.

HE SPOKE too soon. Late editions of the papers reported that two pursuit machines from a field near Rabat had challenged a northbound Potez Scout. Despite repeated warnings the flyers had refused to land, had fled out to sea. The "loyal" ships had then fired a preliminary burst, which went unheeded. Then they had attacked the monoplane in earnest, and it had crashed into the ocean, about eighteen miles from the coast.

A check-up with the local aviation center gave the names of the dead. But the two heroes who had killed them were not mentioned individually. The government, as the old settler had predicted, had found gangsters that would murder comrades, but it was still ashamed of them.

The following day, Brocart was taken to police headquarters, to be questioned. Bourzel had preceded him, picked up at his home. The complicity of the two was evident, but could not be proved. They were released very soon. In any case, the authorities were not eager to punish them, as the needed example had been supplied elsewhere.

He caught up with Bourzel on the street. The lieutenant was surrounded by friends who had waited for him. The group became silent as Brocart came near. They looked at him with distaste.

"Hello, what's wrong?" he asked.

"Surprising, wasn't it, those two machines being in the air at the right time, just at the right spot?"

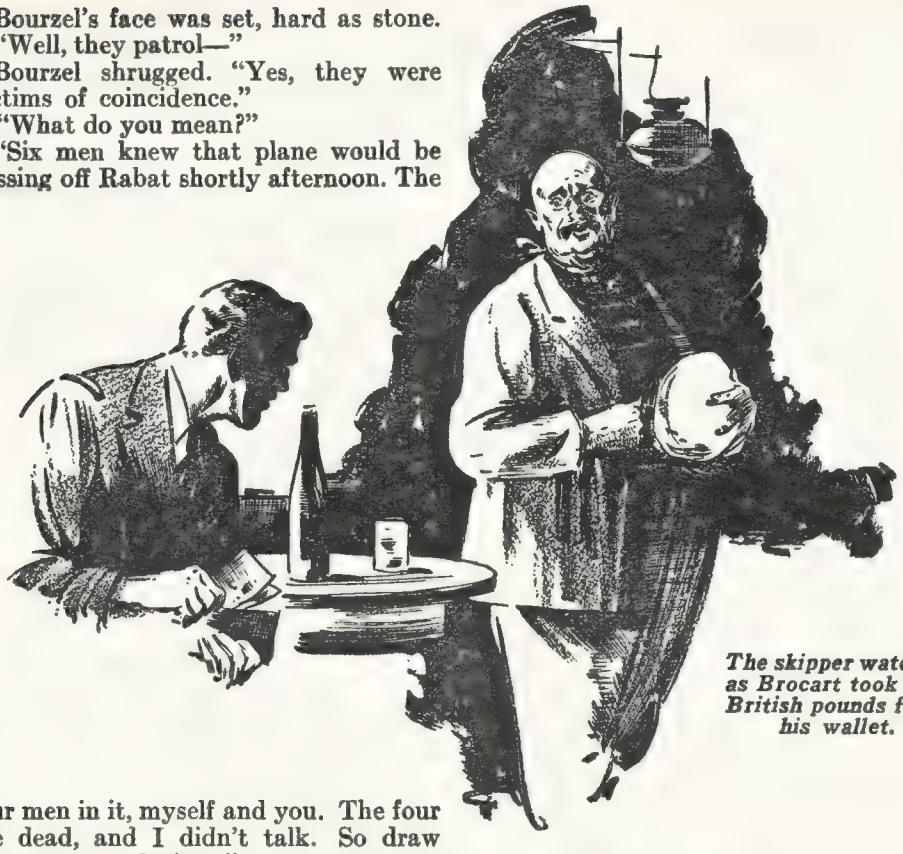
Bourzel's face was set, hard as stone.

"Well, they patrol—"

Bourzel shrugged. "Yes, they were victims of coincidence."

"What do you mean?"

"Six men knew that plane would be passing off Rabat shortly afternoon. The four men in it, myself and you. The four are dead, and I didn't talk. So draw your own conclusions."



The skipper watched as Brocart took two British pounds from his wallet.

Brocart felt as if a bucket of cold water had been thrown over him. They could not suspect him of reporting the plan, they could not—but they did. They believed that he had betrayed four men to their death. He wanted to crush Bourzel's haughty smile with his fists, he wanted to smash those cold faces. A flood of words whirled in his brain, explanations, denials, suppositions. One of the four might have trusted someone.

"I give you my word that I didn't—" he started. Then he remembered that he had spoken to Varin. But one could trust Varin. He would find him, bring him to Bourzel, and they would have this thing out!

"Your word of honor?" one of the young men urged him on, mockingly. "With witnesses, I suppose—"

Bourzel pushed the speaker back. "Drop it! It's sad enough as it is, without having a row." They turned and walked up the street. Brocart wanted to follow, to insist. The first shock of suspicion had left him numb. Now, a strange fury gripped him.

He went to the field to find Varin. And there he understood that the suspicion had spread. He could read it on the faces of the officers in the mess-room, of the secretaries in the office. The field commander nodded to him from a distance, but with obvious scorn and pity in his expression.

"Lieutenant Varin?" an orderly said. "He's out."

"Where?"

"I don't think the lieutenant would like people to know."

BROCART restrained an impulse to slap the fellow's face. Perhaps the remark was unintentional. He knew he must locate Varin, to make sure that his talking had not leaked out through him. He could not wait. And he had overheard

the address of the lady with whom Varin spent much time, in one of the smaller hotels of the Place de France. He was there in less than thirty minutes.

The woman at the desk tried to delay him, but he climbed up the stairs at a run. A bell rang somewhere above, a feminine voice inquired: "Who is it?"

"Lieutenant Brocart," the woman yelled from the hallway. "Lieutenant Brocart!"

And Brocart started as if shot, halted on the steps, panting. That shout, his own name shouted with that peculiar pitch, had given him the clue. He knew now! And, knowing, his surface anger vanished, his brain functioned again.

A young woman stood in a doorway, swathed in a greenish negligée. She was tall and slender, a very neat stock model. In a halo of thick, almost kinky black hair was a round face, with full lips, and very large eyes with small pupils, resembling coffee beans in whipped-cream. Brocart took off his kepi and smiled.

"Sorry to cause so much commotion, Madame. I was seeking Lieutenant Varin—passed by, you know—"

"I am to meet him at five. Would you care to sit down?"

He nodded, entered the room. She poured him Scotch, offered him cigarettes. Brocart kept up a surface conversation, mixed with casual flirtation. He was gaining control of himself rapidly.

"Lieutenant Brocart, Lieutenant Brocart—"

That was what the obese major at Rochemaure had shouted when he was about to escape with young Ferson, the British flyer. The major had called him by name, although he had not stopped at the barracks, had not consulted Captain Lorand. So he must have known, before leaving town for the field, that it was Brocart and no other who would try to leave. And no one had known of his intention except one man: Varin.

What an idiot he had been not to think of that before!

And someone had mentioned Old Man Triboule's name before Varin. Triboule had been arrested. The Englishman Greaver, had trusted Varin because of his friendship with Brocart. And he was in jail. Brocart had told Varin of the cache of gasoline in a garage, and the fuel had been discovered a few hours later!

The light was blinding, suddenly. Varin had managed to get a plane to leave France for Africa. After vain tries while Brocart was there, he had left Oran in a few days from his departure. Varin was a secret agent, and a clever agent, too. What a diabolical idea it had been for him to use Brocart as a lure everywhere, knowing that in his eagerness to escape to the British, Brocart would nose out the proper connections without Varin revealing his hand.

Varin was an agent of Vichy? Perhaps he had been an agent of the Nazis. A member of that famous Fifth Column, of which one heard much and saw so little. Was it so strange, when one thought it over? His father had been a known fascist, had supported Laval in the elections. His brother was on a Vichy commission in occupied France. Brocart realized now that on several occasions, Varin had probed him to ascertain whether he could talk frankly.

The worst of it was that he felt, knew, that Varin liked him sincerely, that he himself, until now, had had a real affection for the man. That was the meaning of civil war, the source of its bitterness —your friends became your enemies.

CHAPTER VII

DEDICATED TO INSPECTOR BASTIDE

VARIN asked: "You were looking for me this morning?" Brocart sat on his cot, hands locked together.

"Yes. Needed someone to talk to." He laughed shortly. "Bourzel and his pals cut me dead on the street. They think I tipped off the authorities on the Potez and blame me for the dead guys! It's about as intelligent as if I accused you, because I told you!"

"Did you tell them I knew?"

"Didn't want to admit I'd cracked to anyone. And there is no use having you being treated like a leper. I'm about fed up on this. I'll do something I didn't want to do. I'll see the American Con-

sul, and have him get in touch with the State Department to prove I'm American by birth. Then I'll go to New York via Lisbon. After that, if I haven't had enough to last me, I can go up to Canada. It means a couple of months, but I have wasted that much in North Africa already and there's no sign that I can get away."

Varin laid his hand on Brocart's shoulder gently.

"You're getting sense. You know, Ray, I'm starting to think it's hopeless. Britain will have to cave in, sooner or later. Her only help comes from America. And the Boches have seven years' start. Listen, I'll do something I wouldn't do for myself, ask my brother a favor. He'll send word down here to smooth the way."

"Thanks." Brocart shrugged. "By the way, you better avoid me publicly. I'll know how you feel. But you'd better ask to change rooms. I'm suspected. Not my fault, but not yours, either."

"Nonsense, Ray. I know you too well."

"You don't suspect me? Thanks." Brocart started to laugh.

"What's funny? You don't want to get too nervous—"

"Well, I was thinking about all the changes in plans that this will mean. Because, you know, I've had a hand in a lot of schemes—looking for a chance for myself. Now, everything I was connected with will have to be dropped. There were a couple of pips, too. New dodges, according to latest developments."

"Better forget all that," Varin advised. "Unless—unless talking eases your mind, lets steam off."

"The saps! They'll postpone departures. God, Varin, if I wanted to get merit with the cops, how I could do it! There's a getaway planned from Marrakesh, in one of the new American bombers. They keep them there, inland, for safety, don't they?"

"They'd be intercepted before reaching Port-Lyautey."

"The hell they would. The machine leaves Marrakesh, with two pilots, one of them an inspector for the Commission. Test flight, you know, before delivery. They come down at Souk-el-Khemis. The inspector is put out, additional gas taken on. They head for Casa. They fly over, just as if on the usual route, then swerve and fly northwest for four hundred miles. The coast patrols wouldn't go looking for them that far. Then they head back for Gib."

"They refuel at Souk-el-Khemis?"

"Oh, there are alternate places. Taznit's one. All in the scheme have agreed to leave it up to the pilot." Having made his point, Brocart covered it carefully. "That old Breguet at Bar-Rechid is due to be used, too. But they'll take a different course, eastward, and try to drop near a British vessel, once they've made the sea."

"Meat for the Spaniards. They have strong patrols on that coast."

Nevertheless, Varin seemed preoccupied after that. And when they went out for the evening, he absented himself for more than an hour, on some pretext, leaving Brocart to entertain his girl. The aviators in the restaurant, in the club to which they went after, did not greet Brocart with more than a nod.

Normally, Brocart would have suffered, become indignant. But he bore their scorn with a smile. Before very long, they would know better. His chief worry was that he had surmised certain facts wrongly. Yet he did not see how he could have made a serious mistake. There were several American bombers at Marrakesh. There must be Armistice Commission men there, and they must justify their presence and do a little flying. Planes did land for fuel at various spots within two hundred kilometers of Marrakesh.

The question was this: would the authorities be satisfied with strengthening the guards at the spots indicated, or would they have pursuit ships ready to take off and intercept the bomber in case it succeeded in breaking away? The government would try to prevent the departure, rather than be forced to destroy the machine, very expensive. But failing the first, would it not prepare to meet the second?

He had his answer that night.

"I don't know what's up," Varin said, showing him a typewritten slip, "but I'm on stand-to duty from five until nine

tomorrow morning. Bloch pursuit. Full load, loaded machine guns. There are supposed to be two of us, as you see. Hear anything?"

"No," Brocart replied, truthfully.

"Scouting machines, I'd understand. There are British cruisers off Casa. I think they'd like to wreck the *Jean Bart*. She's a pretty big ship to have floating around loose. Maybe they expect an air raid."

"Maybe."

Brocart nodded wisely. Yes, maybe they expected an air raid by the British—and maybe they expected a bomber of American make, soaring by Casa and heading for the open ocean.

HE AWOKE first, as the distant roar of the motors being warmed up across the big field droned through the semi-darkness of dawn. Quietly, he sorted a few portable belongings, his letters, his documents. He was very calm and his fingers were steady. Varin had laid his wallet on the table. He looked at Varin, who was still sleeping, head thrown back on the small pillow, fists clenched. The guy slept well, with a clear conscience!

"The orderly'd have a job arousing him," Brocart thought. "In any case!" And he opened the wallet, located the thin slip of paper of the order. As he had hoped, *they* had been cautious to the limit, and it was made out to bearer. The political police disliked personal publicity! "Something else I need—"

It was not in the wallet. And it was not in the pockets of the breeches spread over the back of a chair. He looked through the coat, in the khaki raincoat, hanging from hooks. Cigarettes, small change, a crumpled package of chocolates, some bills.

"What are you looking for?" Varin asked suddenly, in the calmest, most wide-awake voice.

"Eh—uh—matches—"

"Wouldn't be looking for this, would you?" and Varin reached under the mattress, produced an oblong card-holder which he handed to Brocart. Under a surface of isinglass was a card, bearing three seals, two signatures, and a stamped number. Varin swung his bare feet to the floor, sat on the cot, reached for a cigarette. He coughed, then said mildly: "It seemed too smooth, old man. But as you are so innocent that one can never know, I took no chance and reported your information. Now, you know. So what?"

"So you let four good guys be killed."

"Ray, a lot of good guys are getting killed. If you start to pick and choose, to make exceptions, where will you stop? What are you going to do? Tell the others? They won't believe you. You stink, as far as they're concerned. You don't belong out here, you're not grown up. No grudge, and I'll help you go back where you belong."

"You will?"

"Why not? You're a nice guy, but a sap in this sort of business. Westermann, for instance, had me spotted before the crack-up. I think Captain Lorand had his doubts at the last. But you've helped me and done me no harm—"

There was a knock at the door, and the orderly called: "Quarter of, Lieutenant!"

"All right, coming." Varin reached for his trousers. "No harm beyond getting a lot of guys up this morning. I'll go over and tell them it's useless."

Brocart had taken his automatic from the holster.

"Cut it, kid, cut it out. Suppose you shoot me. It's manslaughter, at least. Eight years in Guiana. Your nice little war might be over by the time you came out. Might, as you will note, not will. But it's over for France right now, and it's best for her. Let the other saps cut each others' throats."

Varin picked up the pitcher, filled the basin. He was calm, and had not the slightest idea of Brocart's intention. Brocart lifted the weapon, hesitated for a split second. The first time one strikes a man from behind is an experience in itself. Then he brought the barrel down, as hard as he could, on the spy's skull. It made much less noise than he had imagined.

Varin started to fall over the washstand, but Brocart caught him, swung the body onto the bed. The eyes were closed, the pillow stained with blood. Another dark stream seeped out of a nostril,

The two pursuit ships attacked the monoplane and it crashed into the ocean.

curled about the upper lip, slid down the chin. Brocart lifted the gun again, as it was safer to make sure, then could not strike.

"He's dead," he thought.

He covered the body with the blanket. And he turned the head slightly, so that the blood could not be seen from the doorway. His heart was fluttering, but his hands were deft, weirdly accurate in their every move. He climbed into the flying suit, put on the helmet. He stuffed the order and the card in an outside pocket.

He paused at the door, hesitated. He crossed to the cot, laid his hand on Varin's chest. The man was breathing. He should strike him again, finish him. Or, as he could not bring himself to this, tie him up, gag him. He removed the suspenders, had them in his hand when the knock on the door was repeated.

"Five minutes of, Lieutenant. Better hurry."

"Coming, coming—"

The door started to open. Brocart went to it, passed through. The orderly

followed him through the narrow hallway. Could he tell that he was following Brocart and not Varin? Probably not, for Varin was tall also, and the baggy suit concealed the silhouette.

HE plodded across the field heavily. Had the orderly gone back, re-entered the room? He did that sometimes, to empty the dirty water before the second man got up. And if the orderly did notice that Varin was bleeding, hurt, what would he do? Go for a doctor or call for the police? How many minutes did he have? Would they connect his absence with the planes at once?

He reached the machines. Only a small number of men were there, four armed soldiers, a man in civilian clothes who seemed in charge, doubtless a police agent, and three mechanics.

"There's the other guy," said one of them, pointing.

Brocart knew that he had to hurry. The other man, whose identity he could not even guess, might know that Varin was scheduled for the task. He started to climb into the nearest machine, when the police agent touched his shoulder.

"Plane order, please—"

Brocart produced the slip, which the other scanned, nodding. In turning, however, one of the mechanics saw his face, turned to his comrades. "And I didn't believe it! The swine—" He spat on the ground.

"You weren't to take off until—" the policeman started.

"Will this be sufficient?" Brocart showed him the special card.

The man touched his hat, grinned.

"Oh, in that case!"

Brocart felt that his excitement must be visible. That he fumbled and staggered. In reality, his outward movements were calm, deliberate. He hoisted himself into the cockpit, slid the glass hood into place. He started the engine, and the Gnome-Rhone awoke with a thunderous bellowing. He throttled easily, the wheels were turning.

A few lingering, torturing seconds, and he was in the air.

In the Bloch monoplane, and with good weather conditions, Brocart could make Gibraltar in less than an hour. He rose to five thousand meters and headed straight for his goal. The African coast appeared to slide down hill into space, to his right.

If the killers' machines were in the air, around Rabat, he would have a few hot minutes. There was no precise information, but rumor had it that they were Curtiss Hawks, or even the P.36a. In the latter case, he would be in serious trouble, as they could outspeed, outclimb, outmaneuver his bus.

He had better listen to the radio, and hear what was going on. He plugged in. Someone was speaking, enumerating figures that did not appear to concern him, indications of flight. That lasted for fifteen, twenty seconds, then after a spell of crackling, he was startled by Varin's familiar voice.

"Brocart, Brocart—answer me—"

"What's up?" Brocart said, stupidly.

"Oh, there you are. What was the matter?"

"Forgot to plug in. Nervous, I guess." He scanned the mirror, saw a distant spot moving in the blue, swerved slightly to obtain a direct glance. "There's somebody on my tail. Who is it? Lurchon?"

"It's me, you fool."

This pleased Brocart very little. Varin was a very fair flyer, and a good shot.

"Listen, Brocart, there's still time—"

"What are you doing up here? I thought I'd cracked your skull."

"Not your fault that you didn't."

"You're right."

Brocart granted Varin reluctant admiration. It was not fifteen minutes ago that he had struck him. Yet here he was, in the air, in a single-seater, almost up to Rabat! He could not understand it.

"Listen, Brocart, I can guarantee that if you turn back now, and the machine is not damaged, they'll go easy with you. Perhaps kick you out of Morocco—"

"You're very sweet. And you have a tough skull."

"Not so tough. Must have moved just as you hit me. The blow carried laterally, tore the scalp. But—how about—"

Brocart was enjoying himself. He knew that others were listening in, and keeping the air clear through curiosity.

"I hope I'm not embarrassing you, old

man, by inquiring about your health?"

"Not in the least—" Varin's voice held a chuckle. "I was afraid some people would think this all a fake. I have one hell of a headache, though—I'll never turn my back on anyone again."

"You don't like it when it's your turn."

"Not a bit. But we'll be up with the Rabat chaps in a few minutes—you better make up your mind—"

"Oh, let him come," another voice put in.

"We have company," Brocart stated.

"I told you, Brocart. The intelligent thing is to turn back."

"I know it. But you said yourself I wasn't very bright."

"What are you doing?"

"Me? Shifting about a bit. I don't mind you, Varin, because I know you. But I don't want to meet strangers. They might carry germs. If I am to be murdered, all right. But there's no reason why I should make it easier than necessary."

"None at all," the strange voice put in. "Where are you, Varin?"

"I should be," Varin declared, "about seventeen thousand feet, fifteen miles off shore. We have just passed what seem to be fishing boats, three of them."

"That's a dirty trick," Brocart protested.

"It isn't a game we're playing. All right," Varin exclaimed as Brocart shot up steeply, "we're changing floors, boys. Seventeen five, eighteen five—nineteen—"

Brocart headed out to sea, the altimeter climbed down.

"Fifteen degree west—eighteen—" Varin announced.

THERE was silence for thirty seconds, and the motor pulsated regularly. Brocart cast a glance backward. The other plane was much nearer than it should have been.

"Your machine's faster than mine?" Brocart spoke into the phone.

"Oh, imperceptibly," Varin replied. "Yours drops short of the official maximum, mine's fifteen miles over. You should have asked which was mine. You know I keep the best for myself, always."

A woman in negligée stood in the doorway.

"Had things on my mind."

"Yes. A murder. Ten degrees west—seventeen."

"You get on my nerves. You intone like an auctioneer."

"The war of nerves," said the unseen speaker. Brocart was beginning to look eastward, in the probable direction of the waiting planes, which must be somewhere close. In another moment, they would appear and corner him.

"Head for the coast like a nice guy," Varin suggested just then, as if reading his mind. "Fly low, land at the nearest

field, and nobody will shoot at you. Come on, Brocart."

"We'll let you send a note of apology to the English," the Rabat pilot coaxed.

"We'll even deliver it for you," another voice added.

"Going west again. Sixteen thousand," Varin chanted.

He had gained considerable distance, as he did not follow all of Brocart's moves and kept his course due north most of hte time, being content to keep him in sight. Brocart swung east, headed for the coastline. Varin was almost even with him, and they came nearer and nearer.

"I see the three fishing boats, in a group," one of the Rabat men reported. "Must have missed you. This glare is pretty bad—"

Brocart waited breathlessly. Varin said nothing.

Then he knew that his reasoning had been right, that he had one advantage over Varin. It was the other's interest to bring him in with the plane in good condition, and if possible to achieve that result by himself. Otherwise, Varin would appear very foolish before his chiefs, having been tricked into supplying a fugitive with a good machine, fully equipped and provided with ammunition. Fine spying careers had been wrecked for less!

"Pass below me if you're heading in," Varin ordered.

"Where are you?" the Rabat pilot asked.

"Below it is," Brocart said.

He had some minutes before him, if he could keep Varin under the impression that he was giving up. The two other flyers had been victims of a trick of radio—a pilot grows to trust his ears more than his own eyes, when indications are given. Those two had been flying by compass, instead of looking around.

Brocart passed far underneath Varin's Bloch. The other flew on a short distance, then turned. He was coming to get behind and above Brocart's tail. That was what the young pilot had expected to happen.

He gripped the controls tighter, his palms sweated. His next move would give the answer, inside ten seconds. He had a better chance because Varin could not be wholly clearheaded after that terrific crack on the head. It was amazing that he had taken off at all. Pride, and fear of consequences. And he underestimated Brocart, perhaps with some reason, as the younger man had been foolishly trusting.

"Did you turn south?" the Rabat scout asked again.

"No, east—we're—"

Brocart dipped, Varin came exactly overhead. Even as Brocart started to climb toward him, with full power, Varin banked and tried to locate him. He understood, probably, for he dived very fast, trying to bring the nose of his plane to bear on the target. With Brocart zooming up and Varin plunging down, the planes passed each other at terrific speed. Brocart went into a perfect loop, which brought him behind his enemy.

"Watch out—due north—I—he—"

It was a single second, which seemed to stop in time and to be decomposed into small parts, each one with its own swift pictures, its thoughts, its emotions. Brocart's sights were on Varin's plane, his finger on the trigger. For an agonized flash, he feared that he had been tricked, that when he pressed the release, the guns would not answer.

But they answered, four of them. There was a quadruple burst, four streams of metal, the flick of the tracers. Varin started to fall immediately, but Brocart would not let him go this time without making sure. He dived after the other machine.

Strangely, at that exact moment, he remembered what Inspector Bastide had told him, not to trust his closest friend, and to dedicate his first victim to him. It so happened that his first victory would be over the man who had been his closest friend at the time. He kept shooting and did not zoom up again until he saw the first smoke streaming behind the loser's plane.

HE was amazed to see Varin crash on land. Brief though it had been, the fight had carried them miles inland. He thought rapidly. The other two were somewhat south, and over the sea. He plunged

low, flew a few hundred meters above the ground. He would be harder to locate in that position. He headed due north, at maximum speed. His motor would probably be burnt out, wrecked, but the important thing was to land it, land it with a live pilot. He heard the patrol planes imploring instructions. Then a quiet, monotonous voice reported, possibly from a nearby flying field.

"Police Post Nineteen informs engagement between two planes." The exact location followed. "One crashed in flames. Exact identity unknown, but presumed to be Lieutenant Varin's, as the other is heading northward, flying low and very fast." A pause, vague mutterings, then the words strung out again: "Quezzane Airport, attention. Suspected plane headed your way, will pass above or near you very shortly—"

"Lieutenant Brocart speaking—thank you very much."

He was glad to know where he was. Quezzzane was but a few short miles south of the Spanish Zone's border.

Twenty minutes, fifteen minutes, ten minutes to go. For miles, he had been flying over "neutral" territory. He listened for a last time to the confusion of voices, uttered one word very clearly—then pulled the plug out. He was almost on the Strait.

Four thousand feet beneath his wheels, a sinuous blue line divided two continents. Eight miles, less than two minutes. They would not fire on a single plane, they would understand that he was coming *home*. He saw once more the port and its ships, the town climbing the flank of the hill. And he saw the Rock itself, squat and ominous, fifteen hundred feet of primary gray marble!

"Wonder how long they keep you here?" he thought.

For the past was already sliding into the void. Rochemaure, Casa, Oran, were dim memories. Greaver, Bourzel, Lurchon, Varin, were pale, thinning silhouettes fading from his life.

Somewhere in the north, grayer water curled between two coasts, and above that water, planes fought. Until that was over, nothing else should count.

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Morland struck and the barb set in Ug's ear with that feeling of solidity so comforting to the expectant angler.

OVER THE BANK

AN OFF-THE-TRAIL STORY

By FREDERICK WHITE

WHEN we heard that John Morland had gone over the bank, while driving up to the Bearkill, there was grief and apprehension at the Dry Fly Club. We all admire Morland as an upstanding angler and sportsman and those of us who know him best have found in him a touch of mysticism which, on occasion, crops out most delightfully and unexpectedly. Morland is an authority on ancient and modern fishing lore and, in spite of the almost spirit-

ual quality with which he endows the art of angling, his opinion as to theory and practice is held in great respect by the initiated.

The wreck of Morland's car was found in a little valley, far below the highway, by the State Police who had noticed the evidence of its precipitous descent through tell-tale wheel tracks and broken brush along the roadside.

Morland's body was not in the smashed and crumpled wreckage of the car and at first it was thought that he had been flung out in the jolting drop down the hillside. Eventually he was discovered on the far bank of a stream flowing through the valley, unconscious and fully clothed in his fishing rig. His rod lay beside him with the line, minus fly, extended to its full limit downstream. In his creel was a foot long trout and another, somewhat larger, with a neat hole through its shoulders, lay alongside the trunk of an ancient elm on the opposite bank.

At the Milltown Hospital, to which Morland was taken as soon as possible, the diagnosis was slight concussion, shock and minor bruises. His condition was not considered serious and it was hoped that he might be discharged within a week. These were the bare facts and in our relief from the apprehension of permanent injuries to Morland the "fishing" details of the report were accepted as more or less flights of local journalistic fancy, to be explained when Morland was again on his feet.

Morland's story, however, when he did return, apparently fully recovered, was so curious a mixture of fact combined with stated, if well-nigh unbelievable experience, that it is here set down to be accepted or rejected by the reader according to his capacity for understanding that unusual and peculiar quality in the make-up of certain fishermen far transcending their obvious interest in matters piscatorial, and their admitted ability to catch fish.

WHEN John Morland, speeding his roadster at sixty miles an hour through the early morning mists, saw his left front wheel shoot off at a tangent and, apparently, pace the wavering car straight for the bushes bordering the highway, he realized that he was going over the bank at one of the most precipitous spots on the curving mountain road.

Often, on his way to the Bearkill, he had caught glimpses through the sparse second growth of a smiling valley far below; of a gleaming meadow stream, here rippling through the open and there seeking the cool shadows of clustering trees, sometimes set singly and again in groves of considerable extent. Often, he had wondered at the absence of farm or settlement in the valley, and often he had marked the stream as one worthy some time to be tested.

And now, in a flash, as his car crashed through the screen of brush and hung for a moment above a rugged descent of cliff and boulder and weather-marred tree trunk, he saw the meadow and the stream and the distant protecting hills not only as a scene of exceeding peace and quiet and beauty, but as a picture so familiar and so understood that he himself seemed to be an integral part, and he laughed to think of the manner of his coming again to this valley he now seemed to have known in a dim and distant past.

Morland could never remember the details of his passage from the brush screen to the valley below. He says that it was a confused jumble of conflicting sensations, varying from that of smooth flying to the appalling shock of a head-on collision. And judging from the condition of the car when it came to rest *sans* wheels, *sans* everything except a comparatively intact frame which, miraculously, had also preserved Morland's personal frame practically intact, it would seem that there had been more colliding than sailing on the way down.

The mental processes of a fisherman's mind admittedly are different from those of the ordinary run of people and, for an angler of Morland's standing, it was quite natural that his first thought should be for the safety of his recently acquired Benson rod, generally considered to be the last word in master craftsmanship and scientific efficiency.

Fortunately, the aluminum case

showed no sign of dent or buckle and, his mind relieved, he could now consider the appalling wreck of the car and his own condition with comparative equanimity. The car was a total loss but the insurance would take care of that. Aside from a bump over his right eye and slight soreness about the left hip, apparently he was not injured and the dull headache of which he was conscious was no more than other morning headaches he could remember, although acquired under less strenuous circumstances.

Considering the situation from the angler's standpoint and in view of the perfect day, this new and alluring brook and his own inclinations, there was, obviously, but one thing to do—go fishing. He worked himself somewhat stiffly from out the crumpled mess of steel and, with the aid of a stick of timber, managed to pry open the jammed door of the luggage compartment and haul forth the duffle bag containing his wading rig and other fishing paraphernalia.

While dressing and setting up his rod Morland admits to experiencing a certain sense of unreality about the situation. He could not remember having fished this stream before, yet off to the right there was a stately elm shadowing a deep pool which, somehow, presented a familiar picture and, downstream, where the brook left the meadow and entered a heavily forested area, he seemed to recall, dimly, a wild and rugged ravine with alternate stretches of white water and dark, mysterious pools. The entire valley seemed permeated with a strange, shifting aura, illusive yet familiar, which did not, however, obscure the important fact that here was a promising trout stream.

Morland laced his heavy brogues over his waders, set up the new Benson, admiring its trim, slender strength and perfect action and knotting a small light Cahill to the point of his leader started across the meadow to the pool beneath the big elm.

ENTERING the riffle below the pool he made a few testing casts and, finding rod and fly acting to his liking, he glanced up to the flat water under the shadow of the elm branches. His quick eye discerned a dimple on the surface and cautiously advancing to the lower end of the pool, after a false cast or two, he shot the fly far up in the shadow. With a grunt of satisfaction he watched it settle lightly at the end of a half circle of almost invisible leader.

The surface bulged! Morland struck automatically and a good trout leaped clear of the water. Then, Morland says, something streaked from behind the elm bole, hit the fish at the moment of reentering the water and his line came back to him slack. Almost on the instant a half naked wild man leaped from behind the tree into the pool, and seizing the end of an animated stick he suddenly heaved the transfixed trout high up on the bank.

Somehow, Morland was more angry than surprised even when his eyes rested upon the amazing figure now clambering up the bank with all the agility of an ape.

He knew it was not an ape and there was something familiar about the shock head and brutish features set low upon broad shoulders from which hung long, powerful arms. Arms, torso, and muscular, bowed legs were covered with reddish brown hair and about the middle hung a short skirt of undressed hide. Uncouth sounds came from the thick lips and it stamped upon the ground with flat, splay feet and thumped its hairy chest rhythmically with great, powerful fists.

Then Morland grinned for, from somewhere out of the past, it came to him that there was something familiar about this figure and *something* connected with the taking of fish.

"Ug!" he heard himself cry out.

An expression of amazement spread over the other's features. He stared at John from under heavy brows and made a guttural sound which, to Morland, indicated an understandable form of greeting.

To his surprise he answered without hesitation and in response to his grunted utterance his extraordinary companion bared his strong, dog teeth in what appeared to be a friendly grin and, dropping his sharp pointed stick, extended

hairy arms with hands palms up in what evidently was a conciliatory gesture. Morland climbed the bank, placed his rod against the tree trunk and with a reciprocal gesture advanced and immediately found himself playing a sort of childish pat-a-cake, the formal movements of which seemed to him perfectly familiar.

After that, Morland says, everything was quite easy and natural. He found no difficulty in understanding the meaning and import of the few uncouth syllables which constituted the vocabulary of this creature, or in making himself understood by the use of similar gibberish although he was unable to translate it, even to himself, into conventional words and phrases.

However, the main thing was that they were able to understand each other, in a simple and elemental way, although difficulties arose when Ug—that is what Morland calls him—began to examine Morland's clothes, accoutrements and fishing rig.

Ug's own outfit was simple enough. Aside from his hairy kilt and a rough bag containing a couple of sharp flints —one of them wrapped at the end with sinew for a grip—he carried only three slender spears or darts, the efficacy of which Morland already had seen demonstrated.

Morland's rig, however, was another matter. His canvas coat and his waders were accepted by Ug as having been made from the pelt of some animal with which he was not familiar, and the wicker creel was understandable although the workmanship puzzled him. He intimated to Morland that he must have a very useful She-Thing in his cave and clever at sewing and basketry.

Morland's cherished rod had a narrow escape when Ug, deceived by its spearlike slenderness, attempted to hurl it at a fat woodchuck that poked its head from a burrow some twenty yards away. With some difficulty Morland restrained him and, with still greater difficulty, endeavored to explain the purpose of the reel, the line and the perfect dry fly which Morland had retrieved from the lip of the speared fish.

Ug was delighted as a child with the action of the reel and flowing of the line through the guides but the fly worried him. Apparently, it was so near the real thing as to be uncanny, and Morland noticed a half suspicious, half frightened expression in his eyes as he dropped it and stared, open-mouthed, at Morland as if something fearsome and sinister suddenly had come between them.

Morland says that at the time he, himself, was able to realize vaguely Ug's feeling. Somewhere—some time back of his childhood—he seemed to recall a terrifying experience with which tiny, uncouth figures of creatures of a by-gone age were in some way connected, a far cry from the replica of the perfect image at the end of his leader but, essentially, equally significant.

Fortunately, this uncomfortable atmosphere lifted when Morland displayed his cleaning knife, a stout, one-bladed affair, the use of which Ug could understand and appreciate even if the keen steel and the simple mechanism of the opening and closing blade caused him to regard the implement with reverential awe.

For his part, Morland was comparatively uninterested in Ug's spears; peeled and seasoned wands tapering from butt to point and roughly notched somewhat after the fashion of the conventional arrowhead. He seemed to know instinctively that these were small game or fishing darts as distinguished from the heavier weapons designed for combat or the hunting of more formidable creatures.

IT IS interesting to note that, according to Morland, both he and Ug very shortly began to display symptoms of restlessness. Morland found himself waving his rod tentatively through the quarter circle of the cast while Ug, balancing a dart, with powerful forefinger behind the butt end, tested his weapon along a more horizontal plane. Both of them kept glancing at the pool and Morland admits that he wished Ug would go away somewhere and leave him in undisputed possession of the immediate stretch of water, which he judged was little short of ideal for the dry fly. He says he had the

same annoyed and impatient feeling about Ug as he sometimes experienced on the Bearkill when another fisherman blundered into his favorite water.

Whatever Ug's feelings may have been he was the first to act. A trout leapt clear under the opposite bank and in a flash Ug's dart was on its way. Morland says he never saw anything so fast. Had the dart held a trifle lower it would have impaled the fish at the instant of its return to the surface. As it was, the dart swished through the overhanging grasses on the bank and stuck there while Ug looked disgusted and made such sounds as a fly caster might be expected to utter after missing a rise—could they be translated into modern day idiom.

Morland made up his mind that he could catch that trout. The dart had passed over the fish at the moment of its impact with the water and doubtless had been unobserved. The fish, evidently, was watching for insects dropping from the grasses and probably would hold its station for a time. Morland made Ug understand that it was now his turn and Ug, after gnashing his teeth and making protesting sounds in an effort to save his face, admitted the contention quite amiably and stretched himself out under the tree.

Morland says that as he entered the stream at the lip of the pool, preparatory to taking his casting position, he could not help feeling that he was taking an unfair advantage. He seemed to appreciate, as much from one-time personal experience as from recent observation, just how difficult it was to kill a rising trout with so crude an instrument as a hand-hurled dart; how seldom the opportunity offered and how instinctive must be the instantaneous co-ordination of eye and muscle and nerve control.

As he oiled his deftly tied Cahill—so perfect a representation of the natural insect—and tested the end length of fine leader, he experienced a queer sense of shame and mortification as if he had lost something fine and primitive and wholly personal in accepting, as it were, the artificial aid of scientifically designed and manufactured tackle, and in practicing a mean form of deception in tempting a hunger-driven creature with a fatally barbed replica of its natural food.

Of course, with the rod working to perfection and the fly describing long, graceful curves in the air above him as it followed or preceded the billowing line in the distance-testing false casts, he told himself that this was nonsense, but the feeling of personal loss—of inadequacy—would not down. Somehow, he was blood brother enough to Ug to appreciate Ug's primordial ability to fend for himself with only the aid of the simplest agencies and only an elementary capacity to adapt these to his needs.

The cast lengthened. Morland could see his objective, the butt end of the dart showing through the grass above the water where his quarry lay. The fly hovered for a moment, then settled and drifted slowly. There came a dimple on the surface, a slight *plomp* and Morland struck, pleased that the fish had not broken water and perhaps attracted another of Ug's flashing darts.

This fish bored deep, up, down, and across the pool, but making his fight under water while Morland held him easily on the spring of the rod, giving and retrieving line as necessity demanded. Under the prevailing conditions such a contest was scarcely more than a matter of mechanics to any experienced fisherman. Morland played his trout to a standstill and, without bothering with the landing net, ran the exhausted fish upon a shelving sand bank, killed him and slipped him into his creel. Then he took a cigarette from his pocket, snapped his patent lighter into flame and exhaled a satisfying lungful of smoke.

SO METHODICAL and orderly had been the entire procedure that Morland had almost forgotten that he was not fishing alone till a wild screech from the bank brought him back with a start.

Ug was leaping and whirling about like an over-excited dog, his formidable teeth clashing and his appearance and action indicating unreasoning and terrified rage. One word Morland was able to separate from the turbid stream of vituperation hurled in his direction, and Morland felt an invisible mane prickle and stir be-

tween his shoulders as he sensed its import.

"Take devil, demon, spirit of evil and terror of darkness," Morland explained with a wry smile in relating this, "boil them down into one word meaning some not understandable thing to be feared and, if possible, destroyed, and you will have a faint idea of what Ug thought of me personally, after seeing me entice a trout with an evident fetish, draw it to me by means of invisible attraction and then breathe smoke from my fiery insides."

Morland says that while he was able to appreciate Ug's reaction perfectly, and even sympathetically, he realized the impossibility of bridging the ages by any attempted explanation. He knew that he was in a bad fix and that if they came to grips Ug could tear him into little pieces with the utmost ease and doubtless would.

He decided that the best defense he could call upon was the cigarette smoke, for he felt certain that Ug would never dare to come in touch with these reeking fumes from supposedly hellish fires contained in a human form. He lit a fresh cigarette from the stump of the old and in a smoky haze backed slowly away and climbed the opposite bank. As he straightened up something slithered along the side of his loose canvas fishing coat and stuck quivering in the ground beyond. It was one of Ug's darts and Ug himself, thinking that he had made a hit, was peering hopefully across the water.

Morland laughed at him and pounded his chest to demonstrate that he was unhurt and unafraid. With a wary eye on his raging antagonist he retrieved the thrown dart and exhaled a cloud of smoke mockingly. He began to feel an itching to try a shot himself. He knew how to hold the dart; forefinger behind the blunt end and thumb and other fingers supporting the shaft, and he understood the long thrust and follow through of its launching.

Ug was dancing up and down inviting reprisal and Morland could not resist the temptation. His right arm snapped back, then forward, and the dart flew from his relaxed grasp straight for the weaving, gibbering figure opposite him.

It was then that Morland began to realize the enormous physical difference the ages had wrought in the muscular capacity of primitive and modern man. Ug easily dodged the shaft, half spent before it reached him, and peered at Morland suspiciously, fearing, no doubt, that this weak attempt might mask some new form of trickery calculated to throw him off his guard.

And then Morland felt fear. Such hopeless, physical fear as a rabbit must experience beneath the shadow of a leaping wolf. Encumbered by his wading rig, he could not hope to escape by flight; he dared not back away lest Ug find nerve enough to follow and eventually transfix him with his darts. The thought of fighting with arms, nails and teeth came to him as a natural thing to do, but was discarded in the light of the growing certainty of his own pitiful inferiority.

Morland says he never felt so thoroughly licked and beaten in his life, even before the clash had really started. He lit another cigarette, realizing that in this piffling little cylinder of paper and dried leaf lay his only defensive weapon, tipped as it was with the mystery of fire and the visible evidence of its presence. And from that, he says, his brain began to function, not automatically as when he raised and landed his trout, but as that of a keenly sensitive being accustomed to draw on many minds of all time for his own necessity.

MORLAND tells this somewhat apologetically, as if his subsequent action was open to question and his sportsmanship in doubt. He gives the impression that he would greatly have preferred to meet the issue man to man and on the simple terms of a by-gone age had he been physically fit to cope with Ug on anything like a muscular equality.

What he did do was to release the fly from where he'd hooked it to the reel frame and begin to shoot it high across the water, increasing the distance with every forward cast, driving it nearer and nearer to the startled Ug who evidently was at a loss to account for the purpose

which lay behind this strange maneuver.

This tiny replica, under the skillful manipulation of an expert fly-caster equipped with the most perfect implements of his craft, was Morland's offensive weapon. As he explains, its effectiveness was due greatly to Ug's fear of the unnaturally natural and his inability to grasp the method of its control.

Morland says the new rod worked magnificently. At sixty feet it handled the line easily and he was confident that he could place the fly with precision when ready. Ug was watching him, a dart in either hand, when Morland had his distance. The fly whipped across Ug's face and he sprang back with a yell of surprise and terror. Quickly, Morland snapped it into the back cast and stripping off a few extra feet of line instantly shot again.

This time Ug ducked and the fly missed his shaggy head by an inch or two. Morland struck, got him on the top of the ear on the recover, and the barb set with that feel of solidity so comforting to the expectant angler.

As Morland stripped in the slack and the line came taut Ug went into action and, according to Morland, no salmon or heavy trout in his experience ever displayed such evidence of mad rage and blind terror in the first flurry. His short rushes up and down the bank were interspersed with uncouth leaping and gesticulations accompanied by raucous screams and wild yells.

Morland was hard put to save his leader against the sudden and varying strains, and it was only by the closest co-ordination of eye and hand that he was able to keep his rod sprung at the proper tension without inviting a break.

But now that he had his antagonist hooked he did not know what to do with him. Once, foolishly, he had cast at and snagged a swimming snake and something of the same feeling of abhorrence and misgiving came to him in the present situation. In each instance he had overlooked the fact that the angler's instrument is essentially an attracting rather than a repelling medium. Conceivably, he might be able to draw Ug to him, even if unwilling, but, on the other hand, he was hopelessly impotent to hold him off through any physical contact of rod or line.

Perhaps the same mad impulse which, at times, actuates a fighting fish to rush his captor drove Ug to his next move. With a yell he splashed into the pool and began to wallow across, thrashing the water before him with his darts and roaring with fear and rage.

Morland says that he thought it was all over with him. Instinctively he stripped, and with rod held high kept a taut line all through the rush. He says it was the most thrilling moment in all his fishing experience. Ordinarily, this tactic might result in his not getting his fish but *now* it could only mean that Ug would get him.

Ug was now within ten feet of the bank and already jabbing with his darts. Morland stood above him, rod bowed to the limit in a futile effort to turn or upset him through painful strain on his sore ear. Ug's darts were reaching out in quick, vicious thrusts and Morland felt that a few seconds more would force the climax. He was frightened, desperate, and at the same time filled with a beastly rage and an urge to bite, claw—anything—so long as his strength lasted.

He drew long and deep through the butt of the cigarette between his lips. Spat out the useless stub and the accompanying rush of pungent smoke straight into the savage, contorted face raised above the bank.

AGAIN, Morland is sincerely apologetic about this episode. He says that at the last critical moment he was quite prepared to fight savagely, if bootlessly, tooth and nail, until the end, and that the last lungful of smoke, inhaled and ejected, was simply a clearing away of non-essentials before the hand-to-hand fray.

However this may be—and Morland evidently is sincere about it—the result was startling although, considering all that had gone before, not so astonishing as the fact that Morland should, for the moment, have forgotten the most effective instrument of his defense.

When Ug received the blast of smoke full in the face, when biting tobacco

fumes seared his eyes and caused him to gasp and choke, he quit. Stumbling back from this malignant breath of evil that burned and strangled he plunged into the pool and, like an otter, made his way downstream, under water when possible or sliding, half concealed, through riff and rapid, in a panic-stricken effort to escape from this sinister unknown.

Once only he checked, and Morland seems to feel that there was something decidedly pathetic in this last glimpse of him. Morland, surprised, relieved yet somehow dissatisfied, had watched Ug's passage downstream calmly. His whirring reel told him that he was still fast, and for the first time in his fishing life he did not follow along in order to prevent a break when the line should run out. He lowered his rod to the horizontal so that the pull might be straight, and as a sharp tug and the slack bellying of the line told him he was clear he looked up.

Ug was kneeling waist-deep in the water, both dripping arms, dart-tipped, extended above his wet sleek head but whether in surrender, supplication or gratitude Morland could not judge. His guess is that the last prick of the trout fly as the leader parted stopped Ug momentarily and brought him a stunning realization of something so momentous as to be utterly beyond the bounds of his simple cosmos; the glimmering recognition of a mighty power to be tamed and harnessed—even by such as he—in the ages to come.

Morland turned away. He says that he was overwhelmed by a sense of unfairness. Brains had overcome brawn. Knowledge—the accumulated knowledge of the ages—had beaten, inevitably, the primitive forces of ignorance and superstition and Morland, while appreciating that to which he owed his safety, felt an immense pity for the simple, rude figure beaten to its knees by something less—or more—than the only strength it was capable of comprehending.

When he looked again Ug was gone. Mist was swirling up the valley from the cleft of the dark gorge, obscuring the middle distance and giving an air of unreality to tree and bush and winding stretch of stream. Morland suddenly felt tired, relaxed, as a man will after losing or landing a notable fish. He sat down and began to reel in his line, but the effort was beyond him and, with a delicious sense as of sleep pressing him gently to the fragrant meadow, he closed his eyes.

When he woke up he was in the hospital.

THE COURTSHIP OF PIE-BITER SMITH

By WINSTON NORMAN

"Lily," I says, "how much would that tub of yours hold?"

MOST any girl can look like a lady where you got water to wash her in, but in Argentite, Nevada, during the silver stampede, our nearest waterhole was fifty miles away. Water sold as high as four dollars a gallon, so we took our ladies straight till Lily come to town.

She come equipped with her own bathtub, a large-size tin one. Pie-Biter-Smith, who runs the Silica House Saloon, had imported Lily all the way from Los Angeles for what he claimed was singing purposes, so when somebody yelled, "She's here!" we all rushed out to see what Pie-Biter got.

The minute I seen Lily, I knew she was the girl I wanted, and so did everybody else. With those large blue eyes and raven tresses, and that slender waist she had, she was pretty as any prospector's dream. And later on, when she sung in the Silica House with that sweet

soprano voice, I banged my fist down and says, "Pie-Biter, that's the girl for me!"

"Oh, no, she ain't, Nebraska," says Pie-Biter, "because she's mine."

It turned out this was a mistake on both our parts, because whereas several ladies had already showed up in Argentite with the announcement they was going to sing for a living, but they never did, Lily was different. You soon found out that her motives was purely musical. This made me decide I would marry her, but so did Pie-Biter Smith.

It settled down to a fight between him and me, the richest men in camp. My location, the White Queen Mine, was low-grade ore, but the government would take all I could produce, under the Sherman Act. There was New York financiers ready to back me up, and when we got a railroad put in, all the flat cars you could roll downhill to hell in the next forty years wouldn't have hauled out what I was then worth.

As for Pie-Biter Smith, he had a fine saloon and the fortune he made on the side from jumping claims.

One night we was setting there, as usual, Pie-Biter and me, glaring at each other across a bottle, and Lily setting between us. I remember how sweet she looked. She would touch nothing but water, which was two-bits a glass.

"Nebraska," says Pie-Biter, "three is a crowd, so excuse me if I ignore you. Lily," he says, "the day you make me the happiest man in the world, anything you want is yours. I'll buy you a diamond bigger than the nose on Nebraska's face over there."

"Pie-Biter is a continental liar," I told her, "and I'll buy you one twice as big as any he says. I can buy you forty silk dresses every day like the one you got on, Lily. What about it?"

She looked at both of us with her blue eyes very modest, and she says, "I have not given my heart to any man yet, and the only present I really want is some water."

Pie-Biter and me both begun shouting for another glass, but she says, "I mean, for my bathtub. I'll just die if I don't get a bath pretty soon."

This shocked me, because I figured Lily had give up such an idea when she seen the desperate water situation in Argentite. "Lily," I says, "you are asking me the hardest thing a lady could ask. It will take time. How much would that tub of yours hold?"

We figured it would hold about twenty gallons, including Lily. Multiply that by four dollars per gallon, and it would be roughly eighty dollars every time she took a bath. Money didn't matter, but it shows you the cost of a lady being delicate.

"Lily," I says, "you got to realize that every speck of water in town is needed for the internal consumption of man and beast. Do you think you could get along with a basin and a sponge? You could sponge from the feet up as far as possible, and from the neck down as far as possible."

"No," says Lily, blushing, "because I want to lie and soak. I hate to be selfish," she says, "but I can't stand myself the way I am much longer."

"Excuse me," says Pie-Biter, standing up. "I've got to take care of the boys." He went off and left us alone.

THAT was my chance. I told Lily how much I loved her, and I explained the bath problem. I said, in a desert climate like that, nobody would ever notice. You evaporated, and water being scarcer than whiskey was, you usually drunk the whiskey and went on evaporating till you shed your old skin like a sidewinder, only not all at once. This kept you reasonably clean.

"When I build a railroad, Lily," I says, "I will haul you more water than Noah ever seen, but meanwhile the supply only barely meets our internal consumption. If you buy mules to haul your own, your mules drink, and by the time you get back from Soda Springs with a load, you practically turn around and start back for another one. Mules can survive on second-hand dishwater pretty fair, but after too many washings it sickens their stomachs and they die on you. If I got you a bath, Lily, do you think you could feel different about me?"

She didn't exactly say yes, but the

way she looked at me with her beautiful eyes, I felt wonderful. I rushed out of the Silica House to see if I could buy enough spare water in Argentite to wash her all over in.

But Pie-Biter Smith, the sneaking cheat, had got there first, and he had optioned all the water in town. I seen him rolling a barrel up the street to fill her bathtub with.

I rushed around looking for Chuckawalla Jim, the mule-skinner who done most of our hauling, but I found out Pie-Biter had already hired Chuckawalla, and sent him off for another load to Soda Springs, fifty miles away.

It looked bad, but I figured maybe the first few baths would not soften Lily up to where she would prefer Pie-Biter instead of me. It was the baths after that which would count, and pretty soon I would have a railroad.

So I got me a team of mules and a load of barrels. I started out in the light of the moon, beating up them mules like I never beat mules before.

I traveled all night and when I finally come to Soda Springs, with my tongue hanging out in the desert sun and my mules exhausted, I seen Chuckawalla Jim was there.

"Hey! You heard the news?" he yelled.

"What news?" I yelled.

"I got this off an Indian," he yelled, waving a newspaper in the air. "Congress repealed the Sherman Act."

"Great God!" I says, drawing up alongside of his team at the waterhole. "You mean there won't be no more Free Silver? The government won't buy it for Treasury Certificates?"

"That's what she says right here," says Chuckawalla. "Congress repealed it, and President Cleveland's name is wrote on it as big as the side of a house."

"Hell," I says, "what'll we do now?"

"I don't know about you," says Chuckawalla, "but as soon as I get my mules rested up, I'm heading for Los Angeles."

"You got a load of water there."

"Sure," he says, "but I'll dump it."

"Chuckawalla, let me swap you teams," I says. "I'm going back to Argentite."

"You're crazy," says Chuckawalla.

"Crazy or not," I told him, "I got to get that water back to Pie-Biter Smith. We need water for a reason you would never suspect. I regard it as my duty."

So we swapped, and Chuckawalla went off towards civilization. I turned around with his water and I skinned mules all that day. I talked to mules in a language they know, and I come to Argentite in record time.

"Here's your water, Pie-Biter," I says. "How about splitting it, so we can go fifty-fifty on Lily's baths?"

Pie-Biter laughed at me. "Get mules, Nebraska, you son of a burro," he says, "and haul your own goddam water!"

SO I did. I bought mules, and then I bought more mules. I bought mules till my cash run out, and then I bought mules with shares in the White Queen Mine, till I had every four-legged creature in Argentite, and my mine was all gone, but it was worth it to keep Lily clean.

Then I went in the Silica House and I carelessly left that newspaper there, which Chuckawalla had give me at the waterhole.

When they seen the news about repeal of the Sherman Act, the bottom fell out of that silver boom so quick that not even a self-respecting ghost would have stayed to haunt the town of Argentite.

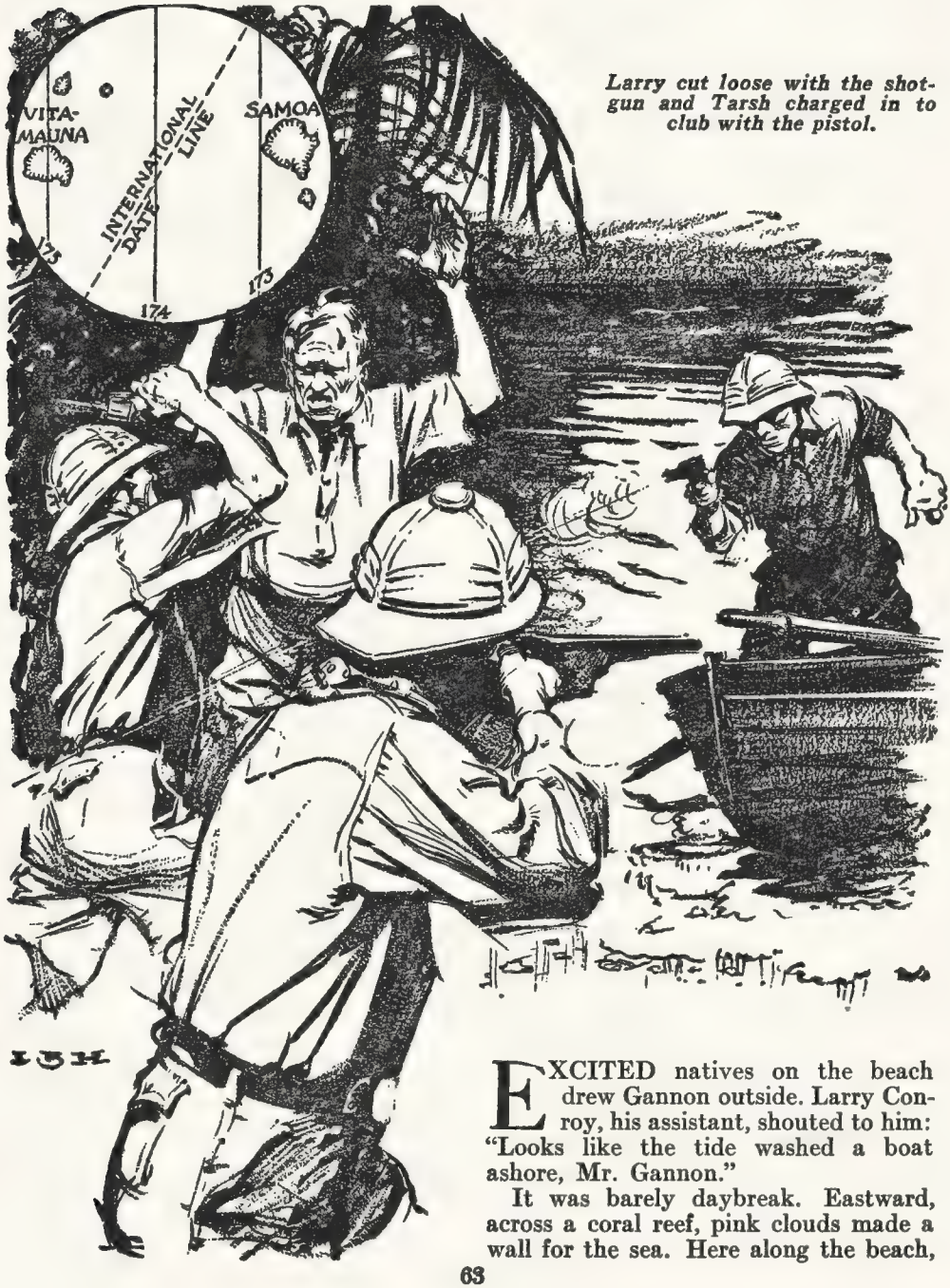
An exodus begun like when the Tribes went high-tailing out of Egypt, and pretty soon there wasn't a living soul in Argentite. We was all gone.

You can go out there today and see how fast we went. There is bottles still setting on tables, and hats on hooks, and pots on stoves for the last meal that never got cooked. You can see the very spot where Lily once sung in the Silica House Saloon, and you can see the shack where Lily lived, with pretty dresses still in it, and a picture on her wall that says, "To Lily, the sweetest little songbird in the world, from Pie-Biter Smith."

Lily had her choice. She could stay there and be a lady with Pie-Biter till the water run out, or she could look around for transportation. People needed mules. They would pay anything for mules. I had all the mules, so Lily married me.

SHOTGUN ISLAND

By ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON



Larry cut loose with the shotgun and Tarsh charged in to club with the pistol.

EXCITED natives on the beach drew Gannon outside. Larry Conroy, his assistant, shouted to him: "Looks like the tide washed a boat ashore, Mr. Gannon."

It was barely daybreak. Eastward, across a coral reef, pink clouds made a wall for the sea. Here along the beach,

sloping palms made a wall for the land. Gannon emerged from the trading store in ill humor. This chatter on the beach had spoiled his sleep.

He heard Conroy call again: "She's got a dead man aboard her, Mr. Gannon."

Gannon elbowed his way through the ring of natives. At the water's edge he saw a twenty-foot motor boat. The boat's single occupant lay face up and had been dead for a day or more. He was a white man in the dungarees of a sailor. His open shirt exposed a spread-winged frigate bird tattooed on the chest.

"Petrol tank's dry," Larry announced.

"Likely he's some beachcomber," Gannon growled, "who stole a boat and then ran out of fuel when he got to sea."

The circumstance irked Gannon. For one thing, it meant they'd have to make a report to the Suva police. Reports were always onerous to Gannon; especially when they brought police over to this outlying island of Vita-Mauna. Always trying to make something out of nothing, the police were.

"Look the beggar over, Conroy."

Larry Conroy, in fresh whites and cleanly shaven even at this early hour, stepped into the boat. He went through the dead man's pockets and found nothing but a few shilling coins.

"Ain't he got any duffel or anything?" queried Gannon.

"I see a satchel under the bow thwart," Larry said.

"Fetch it along up to the office," Gannon directed. "Ought to be somethin' in it to help identify this blighter." Gannon then turned to a brawny half-caste who acted as clerk in the store. "Wind a sail around him, Tama. Then stow him in a warehouse till you get a pine box ready. Come along, Conroy."

As Gannon slouched back toward the store, Larry Conroy followed with the dead man's satchel. They were as unlike as any two white men in the islands—Gannon a stocky Australian of fifty, unkempt and indolent; Conroy an energetic, rosy-cheeked Yankee of twenty-four. For years Gannon had been Vita-Mauna manager for Capricorn Copra Company, Ltd., operators of a hundred-odd trading stations in the South Seas. But only recently had Larry Conroy been sent here as Gannon's assistant.

THE store was a rambling, sheet-iron structure with rubber trees giving shade to its compound. Inside were counters stocked with calico, tools, tinned meats and the usual trade goods.

Gannon and Conroy turned into the manager's private office. "Take a look through that bag, Conroy, and see if we can put a name to this blighter. Then make out a report for Suva. A blasted lot o' bother, I say."

The satchel wasn't locked. Larry opened it and looked in, expecting to see the soiled personals of a sea tramp.

What he saw startled him. His hand came out with a package of ten-pound notes. Many similar packages were in the satchel.

"Blimey!" Gannon gasped. His face, grossly indolent a moment ago, now became taut and alert.

"Cash of the realm!" announced Larry. He inverted the satchel and dumped the currency packets on the table. "Shall I count it, Mr. Gannon?"

Sight of the money sent Gannon's blood racing. A windfall, this! Why report it to the police? No reason at all except Larry Conroy. Resentment against Conroy welled within Gannon. But all he could think to say was, "Aye, count it."

The money being in sorted denominations, Larry was able to make a quick count. "Exactly twenty thousand pounds," he reported.

A burning avarice to get his hands on that fortune, and keep them there, consumed Gannon. Schemes began storming through his brain. Loot, of course! And only this Yankee stood between it and Gannon.

"Twenty thousand pounds!" Conroy repeated thoughtfully. "Must be that thing we heard over the radio, Mr. Gannon. Remember? Something about the customs office at Suva gettin' stuck up for twenty thousand pounds."

It couldn't be anything else. Gannon now recalled details of the crime. The Suva customs had made ready to ship

twenty thousand pounds in accumulated revenue to an Aukland bank. But the messenger, just as he was taking the money aboard a Matson liner, had been held up and robbed. The thief, although police had a good description of him, had disappeared on the waterfront.

"What was the beggar's name?" Gannon mumbled.

"Easy to look up," Larry said. From an office shelf he took the most recently received issue of the Aukland *Morning Herald,* to which paper Gannon regularly subscribed.

On the front page Larry found an account of the Suva robbery. "Stick-up man was known as Joe Sites," he said, and then read aloud a published description. "Five feet seven, thin build, sharp, dark face. A spreading bird is tattooed on Sites' chest."

"He's our man," Gannon admitted.

Larry began stowing the money back in the satchel. "Right. Couldn't be two fugitives like that in this neck of the sea, each with the right amount of swag on him. Shall I put it in the safe, Mr. Gannon?"

"Aye," Gannon muttered. "Then type a report to get off on the mail boat day after tomorrow."

After locking the money away, Larry sat down at a battered typewriter. Gannon watched him with brooding eyes.

No use offering to split with this Yankee, Gannon was thinking. Conroy would have scruples about robbing a dead man.

"Does this cover it?" Larry turned to show what he had written. Gannon saw that it was a precise statement of facts, ending with—*We are holding this money in the safe, awaiting your disposition.*

"Better add a line," Gannon suggested, "to say that due to the condition of the body we'll have to bury it at once."

"Sure." Larry added the line.

Then he sealed the report in a stamped envelope addressed to the commissioner of police at Suva, the Fiji Islands.

Gannon waited until Larry had dropped the letter in an outgoing mail bag. Then, "See here, Conroy," he cautioned, "twenty thousand quid's a lotta money. If they got wind of it, there's plenty of thugs in these islands wouldn't mind stickin' us up for it. So we better say nothin' about it till a police inspector takes it off our hands."

"A dozen natives saw us take it out of the boat," Larry said.

"They saw us take a satchel outa the boat, that's all. They'll think it was only a sailor's duffel. They're long on gossip, these natives are. If they knew what we found in the bag, they might blab it to the crew of some ship stoppin' here. No use takin' any chances."

"I'll keep it under my hat," agreed Larry. He missed the slyness in Gannon's eyes.

That night Gannon sat alone in his office, mixing rum punches, his mind churning with schemes to eliminate Conroy. With Conroy out of it, the natives wouldn't be dangerous witnesses. From their chatter to the crews of ships touching here, news would go abroad that a dead man had drifted ashore. But there'd be no mention of money. And in this climate the interred body would quickly decay beyond all chance of identification.

Simple enough, Gannon brooded, except for Conroy.

Of course there was a way to put Conroy out of it—but the idea frightened Gannon. His nerves weren't built for murder.

Still, twenty thousand pounds! Gannon mixed another rum punch. His inflamed eyes shifted to a pigeon gun—a single-barreled shotgun—which stood in a corner of the office. Could he use it on Conroy?

"CONROY," Gannon inquired carelessly the next morning, "is Oumila gonna have any copra cargo ready for the *Narcissus* when she gets here?"

The *Narcissus* was not the mail boat due tomorrow, but a copra lugger expected next week. Oumila was a native village on the opposite side of Vita-Mauna.

"Can't say," Larry answered.

"Better go find out," said Gannon. "I promised the *Narcissus* some tonnage, last time she called here."

"O. K.," Larry said cheerfully. "I'll hit the trail right away." He put on laced

boots and a sun helmet and took a path into the bush.

The conference at Oumila, Gannon knew, would take him most of the day. Gannon himself kept busy about the store until noon. Then, "I'm off for a bag o' doves," he remarked to his clerk, Tama.

With the pigeon gun he sauntered into the bush. Wild pigeons were the only game on the island, and Gannon often went gunning for them. This afternoon the natives would hear him shooting and think nothing of it.

In an hour he bagged a dozen doves. All the while he was circling toward the path taken earlier by Conroy. Arriving on it, Gannon followed it inland to a swamp.

The path to Oumila crossed this swamp at its narrowest neck. Here an eighty-foot fau tree had been felled and trimmed to make a footlog. Only on this footlog could anyone cross, without detouring miles out of the way. For the swamp was a morass of slime and quicksand covered only by a few inches of scummy water. Which meant that any solid weight, if toppled off the footlog, would sink irretrievably from sight.

That was Gannon's strategy. He wouldn't need to touch Conroy. He wouldn't need to hide the body, because it would automatically hide itself. To any sterner task of murder Gannon would not have been equal.

Even as it was, his heart thumped fearfully. Sweat made a grimy smear on his face. He waited in dread there, fighting his funk, steeling himself by remembering those twenty thousand pounds.

A bamboo thicket near an end of the footlog made a good ambush. Gannon crouched there, the pigeon gun sticky hot in his hands. Suppose the shot were heard by some native! Well, he was out shooting pigeons, wasn't he? He'd made no secret of it. He'd go in at sundown with a bag of pigeons, asking Tama if Conroy were back yet.

Later he could give out that Conroy had become fed up with his post here, and had quit. Nothing strange about that. Assistant managers came and went, constantly. Conroy's predecessor had stuck it out for less than a month, and then had stowed away between dark and dawn on an outbound ship. In this case there should be no suspicion of murder because there would seem to be no motive. Simple enough to remove that report from the mail bag.

So Gannon crouched in his ambush, waiting there. His watch said four o'clock. Any minute Conroy should be returning from Oumila. Mosquitoes swarmed about Gannon. A million white-hot needles seemed to prick his face.

He mopped it with his sleeve. Why couldn't that Yankee come along, and have done with it? A gnat spanked into Gannon's eye. He rubbed a sweaty thumb there, swearing. The shift made a thorn spike him in the back.

Then he heard Conroy coming. Coming with a swift, free stride through the bush. Gannon cocked the pigeon gun. He poked its barrel through the screen of bamboo. Because the stalks were spaced closely, his range of view wasn't wide. But it permitted him to see a ten-foot length of the footlog directly at the center of the span.

He could hear Conroy coming along the log. Gannon aimed. Then Conroy came into full view. He even stopped at midlog and pulled a pipe from his shirt pocket. Gannon knew he couldn't miss. Not with a shotgun at thirty yards. He drew a bead on Conroy's breast.

Then he saw Conroy take a match from the outer band of his helmet. Nowhere else could a man carry matches, in the bush, and not have them spoiled by perspiration. In this case, Conroy's reach for a match reminded Gannon that the helmet was cork.

It would float. A charge of birdshot would certainly topple Conroy from the log, and Conroy would sink into bottomless mire. But the helmet would float. The thought stayed Gannon's trigger squeeze for a moment. He realized that he'd have to walk out on that log, after the crime, and fish for the helmet. It was only a slight detail, but one on which Gannon hadn't planned. And just now his nerves were too ragged to think. Damn the helmet! He could burn it, of course, after raking it out with a pole.

But now Conroy, having lighted his pipe, was stepping briskly along the log again. Two strides took him out of Gannon's crack of vision. Gannon squirmed to find another—and his movement made the bamboo stems crackle.

Panic seized him, then, lest Conroy should hear and come. It made Gannon hold his breath, as he cringed there. A moment more and Conroy had traversed the log and was swinging on beachward through the bush.

Gannon wilted. The ordeal had sapped him, leaving him sick and weak. He had no stomach to chase Conroy on a firm path. The chance was gone.

PALE and jaded, Gannon arrived home an hour after Conroy. The American greeted him with a grin. "I lined up that cargo for the *Narcissus,* Mr. Gannon."

Alone in his room, Gannon pulled himself together with a drink. Three drinks and a little of his nerve seeped back. The first try had been bungled, he admitted. He must try something else next time.

Something smarter than murder. Murder was out of the question anyway, now. No excuse could be hatched for sending Conroy into the bush again; at least not between now and tomorrow's mail boat. And in the waiting mail bag was a report to the Suva police.

He needed help, Gannon decided. The smartest source of help he could think of was Archie Strawn. Archie, he happened to know, was in Apia right now. And the mail boat leaving here tomorrow would touch at Apia before going to Suva. Why not cut Archie in? A cut of twenty per cent to Archie would still leave Gannon sixteen thousand pounds.

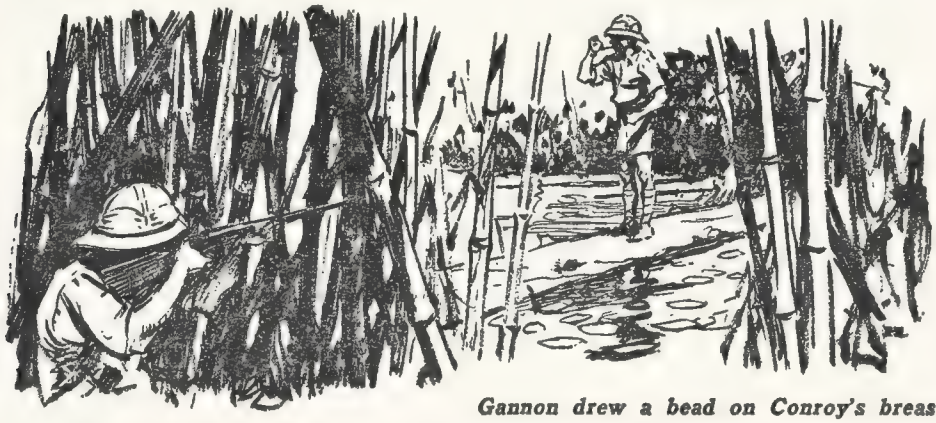
Late that night, while Conroy slept, Gannon opened the mail bag and retrieved the report to Suva. He did not destroy it. He merely laid it aside while he wrote a letter to Archie Strawn. He had connived with Archie more than once before, and knew him to be a sea-going swindler who could make himself plausible in any role.

In part, Gannon's instructions to Archie were as follows:

> Board the Narcissus, calling yourself a police inspector from Suva. You can fake your badge, uniform and credentials. Your best credential will be the sealed report which I enclose herewith. My assistant wrote it, and he's the only one you need to fool.
>
> After fooling him, you simply pick up the money and ride away on the Narcissus. Take a fifth cut for yourself, and keep in touch with me later in the usual way.

Gannon put both this and the original report in a long envelope. He addressed the envelope to Strawn at Apia. Then he dropped it in the sack of outgoing mail.

Early the next morning a mail packet touched at Vita-Mauna. "Take the mail bag out to her. Conroy," Gannon directed.



Gannon drew a bead on Conroy's breast.

When Conroy returned to shore Gannon said to him: "She'll make Suva before the *Narcissus* leaves there. Which means we can expect a policeman on the *Narcissus* to pick up that money."

"I'll be glad to get it off our hands," Larry said.

WHEN the *Narcissus* dropped anchor six days later, two sailors came oaring ashore with Archie Strawn.

Strawn, boldly handsome and extremely British, made a convincing inspector of police. In his stiffly starched whites, and with a police badge on his lapel, he advanced briskly to Larry Conroy who was waiting on the beach. "You're Manager Gannon, I take it," Strawn snapped.

"No, Inspector. I'm Conroy, Mr. Gannon's assistant. This way and I'll take you to him."

They went into the store office and found Gannon. Gannon looked at Archie Strawn without the faintest show of recognition.

Archie hooked his cane over the arm of a chair and sat down. "I'm Inspector Sharkey of the Suva police," he announced, and presented credentials to prove it. Gannon knew, of course, that they were forged.

"Have a drink, Inspector," Gannon invited.

"Never touch anything when I'm on duty," Archie said stiffly. "What about this man Sites?"

"We can dig him up for you, if you like, Inspector."

"As a matter of detail, I think I'd better have a look at him. And the boat he drifted ashore in. A twenty-four foot boat, wasn't it?"

"Twenty," corrected Gannon.

Archie pulled out the report written by Conroy and glanced through it. He did this simply to let Conroy see that the report was in his possession. "Right," he conceded. "Well, let's get under way, Gannon. I've only got about four hours, you know, while the *Narcissus* takes on a bargeload of copra."

"Show the inspector the boat, Conroy," Gannon directed. "While he's looking at it, Tama can put a crew to digging."

As Conroy led Strawn away, Gannon grinned. Smart of Archie, not to mention the money right off. Smart to make it appear that he was more interested in identifying a criminal than in the picking up of loot.

Nor was Gannon afraid that Archie would doublecross him. For one thing, years ago Archie had murdered a pearl buyer at Port Moresby and Gannon could tell tales about that, if he wanted to. On another count, as a side line Archie Strawn controlled a certain rum-running launch now active at supplying liquor to natives of the Tongan, Samoan and Fiji Islands.

An hour slipped by. Two. Three. Three and a half. The *Narcissus* whistled at her anchorage. Again Gannon smiled. Smart of Archie to wait until the last minute before coming for the money.

At last Archie came in snappily with Conroy at his heels. "Check, Gannon," he said. "That spreading tattoo on the chest leaves no doubt about him being Sites. Body's too badly decayed, though, to be taken back to Suva. No reason for it, anyway. And now we'll have a look at that satchel."

"Fetch it from the safe, Conroy," Gannon said.

Conroy unlocked the safe and brought out the satchel. He dumped sheaves of British money on the table. Gannon then called Tama into the office and said to him: "Help Conroy count this money, Tama, so that the inspector can see it's all there."

Tama's eyes bulged at sight of so much money.

Gannon himself sat well apart while the loot was being counted. He was determined not to touch it, or even go with it to the ship.

"It's all here," Conroy announced. "Twenty thousand pounds."

Archie gave a grim smile. "A neat haul that blighter Sites made, what? Well, I'll sign a receipt for it and be trotting along."

He wrote a receipt and signed it. Then came another impatient whistle from the *Narcissus,* and Archie took the bag in hand.

"See the inspector aboard, Conroy," said Gannon.

"Cheerio," Archie Strawn said. He walked out with the money, under escort of Larry.

Gannon waited one minute, then said: "The inspector left his cane, Tama. Run along and give it to him."

He saw Tama catch up with Archie on the beach, and hand him a cane. From the office window Gannon then saw Archie embark with Conroy in a skiff. He saw them row out to the ship. Conroy would only have a minute, after seeing Archie to his cabin, before the anchor would be upped and Conroy would need to hurry back ashore.

All of which made Gannon feel smugly secure. He himself hadn't been alone with Archie one instant. He had spoken no word to Archie out of Conroy's hearing. Tama had witnessed the delivery of the money, all of it. The neatest touch of all was letting Conroy escort Archie aboard.

No one would suspect that Archie had purposely left his cane—a familiar cane—in Gannon's office. Or that Gannon had concealed within it an exact instruction by which Gannon, later, could safely join his confederate and divide the spoils.

GANNON was prepared, of course, for the ultimate exposure of Strawn's masquerade. For although there was no wireless sending apparatus on Vita-Mauna, the store was equipped with the usual radio receiving set.

Exposure came when Larry Conroy failed to hear anything about a solution of the Joe Sites case. When sufficient time had elapsed for the *Narcissus* to arrive at Suva, Larry naturally expected a reaction over the air.

"That's funny, Mr. Gannon. Wonder why they're keeping it dark."

Gannon played up convincingly. "I was thinking the same thing, Conroy. With every shilling recovered, you'd figure the police'd be cheering about it."

Another day passed. No cheers came from Suva.

The complete lack of a reaction puzzled Conroy more and more. "Gee, Mr. Gannon! Maybe that inspector wasn't on the level."

"We'll check on him," Gannon growled. "Next ship comes in, I'll send a personal message by the skipper."

He could foresee that facts would soon reach Suva in any case. Tama had seen the money delivered to a man posing as "Inspector Sharkey," and Tama had no doubt talked freely among the natives. From this source gossip would be relayed to the crews of ships and in time catch attention from the Suva police.

So to protect himself, Gannon discussed the matter freely with the next skipper who called at Vita-Mauna.

As a result, two bona fide police officers came rushing by special boat from Suva.

"What's this?" exploded the senior of these officers, Inspector Broom by name. "There's no Inspector Sharkey on our staff. He put it over on you, Gannon. What did he look like?"

Gannon, in apparent chagrin, gave a hazy description. Larry added a few details. "Ruddy face; clean-shaven. But you're wrong about his eyes, Mr. Gannon. They were slate gray, not blue."

Inspector Broom was furious. He barked questions for an hour. "And so you let him walk right off with the cash!" he finished bitterly.

The junior of the two officers was a thin and somber sergeant named Tarsh. Tarsh's small, brightly black eyes kept darting back and forth between Conroy and Gannon.

"Well, Sergeant," Broom snapped, "what do you make of it?"

"I see three possibilities, sir," Tarsh answered.

"Which are?"

"First," said Tarsh in a cold, impersonal voice, "that the sea-going swindler fooled both Gannon and Conroy. Second, that he split with Gannon and fooled only Conroy. Third, that he split with Conroy and fooled only Gannon."

Larry's face flamed. "If you think I'm in on it," he blurted, "you're crazy."

"Mind your tongue, young man," Broom barked. "Let's have a word with that native clerk."

Gannon called Tama in and Broom questioned him thoroughly. "I see money put in satchel," Tama said. "I see the man take it to ship. Mr. Conroy are go along too."

Broom's eyes fixed sternly on Larry. According to this, no part of the loot could have been rebated to Gannon.

"All I know," Gannon insisted, "is that I turned this cash over to him and took a receipt." He exposed the receipt Archie had given him.

"I'm off," Broom announced, "to trace the *Narcissus* and find out where the man disembarked. Sergeant Tarsh, you'd better stay here and have a look around."

DURING the next fortnight interval, Gannon knew that he was being watched. He discovered that his sleeping quarters had been searched. But he made no complaint. Conroy's room had, of course, been searched too. Tarsh was thorough.

Let him search. The money, all of it, was by now safely away with Archie Strawn.

It amused Gannon to see Conroy's resentment flame more indignantly each day. Whenever Conroy went on an errand into the bush, he was shadowed by Tarsh. Since only Conroy could have received a rebate from the impostor, suspicion naturally fell more heavily upon him than upon Gannon.

Thing to do, Gannon decided, was to give Tarsh more reason than ever to suspect Conroy.

So Gannon locked himself in his office with a quart of rum and the latest issue of the Aukland *Herald*. For a long while he studied the page of classified ads.

Under ranches for sale, he found an item which read:

> Well stocked sheep ranch. A bargain at ten thousand pounds. Address C. Mitchell, Box 44, Wellington, New Zealand.

Gannon typed a letter to C. Mitchell at the address given. He asked for a complete description of the sheep ranch. And would Mr. Mitchell be willing to shade the price for spot cash? Gannon signed the letter, *L. Conroy*.

The next day it went out with the mail to an anchored ship.

Gannon was counting on all mail being subject to surveillance.

And just before the ship weighed anchor, he saw Tarsh row out to it. The sergeant returned to shore with the look of a cat whose long watch at a mousehole has at last been rewarded.

Tarsh entered the store office, finding both Conroy and Gannon there. "Might as well come clean, Conroy!" The sergeant's voice was quiet but his eyes were like black diamonds. "Is it buried in the bush? Or did you just have the getaway man bank it for you somewhere?"

"Don't make me laugh, Tarsh," Larry retorted.

Tarsh sighed. "You're a bit of an actor, I see. Maybe you can explain this." He exposed a letter he had just commandeered from the ship's mail. "So you thought you'd buy a sheep ranch, what? A ten-thousand-quid estate! Not a bad way to salt away your split, but—"

"You're a fool!" Larry broke in. He turned savagely upon Gannon. "Gannon, since I didn't write that letter, you must have written it yourself." Smash! The swift drive of Larry's fist sent Gannon into a heap by the wall.

For half a minute Gannon was groggy. He came out of it, sputtering: "You're fired, Conroy. Pack your duffel and get out!"

"I'd rather be fired than framed," Larry said. Boiling, he went to his room and packed.

"I can't stop him from leaving on this mail ship," Tarsh admitted to Gannon. "If he does, I'll tag along myself. And when he joins up with that sea-going swindler, I'll be right there."

This suited Gannon perfectly. It would be worth a punch on the jaw to be so easily rid of both Conroy and Tarsh.

But to Gannon's surprise and chagrin, Conroy merely moved his baggage to an abandoned shack a few hundred yards down the beach. "What would I gain by pulling out?" he flung bitterly at Tarsh. "Where would I get another job, after being sacked here under a cloud of suspicion?"

Tarsh arched a wise brow. "It won't do you any good to hang around here, either," he asserted. "You can dig up the money some dark night, maybe. But when you try getting aboard a ship with it, I'll be right on your neck."

"Suit yourself, Sarge," Larry flared. "You watch me and I'll watch Gannon."

Tarsh moved into the room vacated by Larry at the store.

TWO WEEKS went by. Gannon continued the lazy routine of his life, letting Tama run the store while he himself dawdled over rum punches. At all times he made himself agreeable to Tarsh. Often the two listened in on news broadcasts. In this way they kept abreast of a hue and cry after an impostor who had posed as "Inspector Sharkey."

This fugitive, they learned, had disembarked from the *Narcissus* at Suva and had promptly disappeared. From there he might have shipped out in disguise on any one of forty boats.

"Likely he's lost himself in some big port like Aukland, or Honolulu, or Sydney," Tarsh guessed.

Gannon had his own idea about that. He felt certain that Archie would in time circle back to a favorite hideout at the westerly tip of Savaii, in British Samoa. An isolated cove there made a base for Archie's rum-running launch. Less than two hundred miles of sea separated that well-hidden hideout from this island of Vita-Mauna.

"Catching up with that slicker," Tarsh remarked, "is Broom's job. It's my job to watch Conroy."

This the sergeant did with persistent zeal. Not that he could keep an eye on Conroy every instant of the day and night. But every time a ship dropped anchor, Tarsh could and did search Conroy bag and baggage. Also he stood by to follow if Conroy should go aboard.

More than that, Tarsh inspected all incoming and outgoing mail, in case Conroy should be keeping in touch with a confederate.

All of which brought smug smiles to the face of Gannon. For Tarsh quite missed a message which arrived neatly from Archie Strawn. Gannon himself had been watching for it, patiently. Each batch of mail brought several copies of the Aukland *Herald* and always Gannon studiously perused a column headed *Personals,* which appeared on the page of classified ads.

At last Gannon read therein the item he had been waiting for.

> Frank:
> Will leave station 173 at dawn May 19th. Will arrive station 175 at ten P.M. same evening.
> Roy.

Gannon's smile broadened to a grin. It was all he wanted to know. The approximate longitude of Archie's Savaii hideout, at the westerly tip of British Samoa, was 173 degrees. And the 175th meridian cut squarely through Vita-Mauna.

So Gannon now knew exactly how, when and where he himself would disappear forever from the vigilance of Tarsh.

But it must be handled in such a way that suspicion would fall more pointedly than ever upon Conroy.

Late that night, while Tarsh slept, Gannon took the pigeon gun which had always been kept conspicuously in a corner of the store office. Loading the gun, he carried it a short way into the bush and concealed it in a hollow log.

At breakfast he complained to Tarsh: "I heard someone prowling the store last night, Sergeant. Maybe it was some native, or maybe it was that blighter Conroy."

"We'll check to see if anything's missing," said Tarsh.

Nothing seemed to be missing except a pigeon gun. Tarsh narrowed his eyes. "Looks like that Yankee armed himself, Gannon. I'll go down and work him over."

"Need any help?"

"I can handle him." Tarsh went briskly down to Larry's shack on the beach.

Gannon observed from the store veranda. He saw Conroy emerge and heard the two arguing there. Conroy's voice came in a high pitch of protest: "You're fat between the ears, Tarsh. But search and be damned."

Gannon saw Tarsh enter the shack. From the length of time he was in there, the search must have been thorough.

In the end the policeman returned empty-handed to the store. "It doesn't spell anything, Gannon," he grimaced. "The blighter could've hidden it in the bush, somewhere."

"What for?"

"To crack down on us with, next boat

day," Tarsh argued. "How else could he get away from here with that money?"

He admitted, however, that evidence thus far did not warrant the arrest of Conroy. "Nothing we can do but keep an open eye, Gannon."

More days passed with Tarsh watching Conroy, and with Conroy watching Gannon. Gannon himself watched nothing but the calendar. May 19th was the day. And ten at night was the hour.

ON the sticky hot morning of May 19th Gannon announced to Tarsh, and to Tama, and to anyone who cared to hear, that he was taking a hike to Oulima. "To drum up a cargo for the next boat," he said. Such an errand being strictly routine, it aroused no comment.

Shortly before noon Gannon took a bush path for Oulima. Out of sight from the beach, he retrieved his pigeon gun from the hollow log With it he continued on until he was halfway across the island. Here he came to the footlog which spanned a quicksand swamp—the exact spot where he had once waited in ambush for Conroy.

This time Gannon merely dropped his pigeon gun in a bamboo thicket and passed on.

He arrived at Oulima on the southerly shore of the island. The high chief there greeted him gravely and ordered his women to bring a feast of fruit and fish. Gannon offered a present of red beads. He was skilled in the art of dealing with these natives. All through a sweltering afternoon he sat with his back to a post in the guest *fale,* and sipped kava, and listened to speeches from the talking chiefs, and forced himself to eat half-raw fish, and in the end making his own plea for six bargeloads of copra.

There was a lengthy haggling as to whether the price should be nine pounds per ton, or only eight pounds six. Gannon sat fanning himself with his helmet, while brown-limbed girls brought him food and drink—and toward sundown closed the deal at eight pounds nine shillings per ton.

Not that the price made any difference. This entire scene was being staged simply for its later effect upon the mind of Sergeant Tarsh. It made Trader Gannon, on this 19th day of May, seem to be sincerely engaged at routine trading.

Returning homeward along the bush path, he came to the swamp spanned by a footlog. Gannon moved halfway across the log. There he stopped and took off his helmet.

He let the helmet fall, so that it struck the scum below and floated there. Just so it would be found floating, if Gannon himself were to fall from the log and sink into bottomless mire.

Bareheaded, Gannon continued across the log to a thicket of bamboo. There he picked up the pigeon gun. Aiming carefully at the floating helmet, he pulled the trigger. The gun boomed. Birdshot riddled the helmet and splattered mud over it. Just so would the helmet be found had Gannon been bushwhacked as he himself had once planned to bushwhack Conroy.

Tomorrow Tarsh would see the shot-riddled helmet floating there. Let him draw his own conclusions.

Dropping the shotgun, Gannon recrossed the footlog. He returned along the path toward Oulima. It was dark when he emerged from the bush there and easily he managed to skirt the village without being seen. He then tramped three miles down the beach to a cove screened by a bend of the shore from all island habitations.

Nothing to do now, except wait for ten tonight. Ten P. M. on the night of May 19th. Archie wouldn't fail him. He wouldn't dare to, reasoned Gannon. Archie was on the way now, from Savaii, in that rum-running launch of his. One hundred and fifty miles. Yes, a fifteen-hour cruise starting at dawn would put him here at about ten P. M.

More than once, in years past, that same launch had landed liquor at this very cove. As it was strictly against British law to furnish liquor to natives, only at such an out-of-sight cove as this could the contraband be landed.

However tonight Archie would come only for the purpose of picking up Gannon. The launch would stand well offshore while Archie oared to the beach in a dinghy.

So Gannon built a fire for a signal. At ten tonight, Archie would see it and know that Gannon was waiting here.

Squatting by the fire, Gannon reconsidered every angle. Suppose, for some reason, Archie failed to come. It would mean that Gannon must hide in the bush for a few days, living on fruit. The helmet would be found and Tarsh would arrest Conroy for murder. Tarsh would then take a handcuffed Conroy to Suva on the first ship. Which would get rid of them both and give Gannon an opportunity to ship out unmolested.

Or suppose that Archie, arriving on schedule, should try a little murder job of his own! Archie had two murder motives, Gannon admitted. First, Gannon knew enough to send him to the gallows; and second, by doing away with Gannon, Archie wouldn't need to divide the twenty thousand pounds.

So Gannon took an automatic pistol from his pocket and made sure it was loaded. He was prepared to use it if Archie should get tough. Then he tossed another stick on the fire—and waited.

LARRY CONROY was awakened by a pounding on the door of his shack. It was just daybreak on the morning of May 20th.

Opening the door, Larry saw Sergeant Tarsh standing there. Tarsh's small black eyes had a suspicious flicker. "Where," he demanded, "is Gannon?"

"How would I know?"

"He took a hike to Oulima yesterday," Tarsh said, "and isn't back yet."

Larry grinned. "Looks like he did a fadeaway, Sarge. I always said you'd better keep an eye on him, 'stead of watching me all the time."

"He hasn't left the island," Tarsh insisted. "There's been no ship in."

Then a shout from the beach made Tarsh turn around. A native from Oulima had just emerged from a bush trail and was giving some sensational news to Tama in front of the store. Tama beckoned excitedly to Tarsh.

"I better see what's up," Tarsh growled. He hurried to join Tama and the man from Oulima.

In a few minutes Larry saw all three of them disappear into the bush toward Oulima.

Three hours later Sergeant Tarsh returned alone. In one hand the sergeant carried a pigeon gun. His other hand held a mud-bespattered and shot-riddled helmet. He came directly into Larry's shack.

"What's up, Sarge?"

Tarsh put down his exhibits and drew a pistol. "You're under arrest, Conroy," he announced, "for the murder of Gannon."

"You're cock-eyed. I haven't been near Gannon."

"On the way home from Oulima last night," Tarsh charged, "he was blasted off a footlog into a swamp. With a pigeon gun you stole from the store. Your motive's clear, Conroy. He found you digging up that money and so—"

"Did you fish out the body?" Larry broke in.

"No chance of it," Tarsh grimaced. "No bottom to that bog, Tama says. I told him to round up every available native and sound the place, using long bamboo poles with hooks on the ends. It won't do any good, though. And you can't dig with shovels. They say it's half water and half slime for fifty feet down."

Icy anger swept through Larry. He knew that Gannon must have faked his own murder in order to fade away from this island.

"So I'm taking you to Suva on that tramp," Tarsh announced.

"What tramp?"

"The one poking in through the reef right now."

Larry turned to look seaward from a window. A stubby little freighter, flying a Swedish flag, was nosing into the lagoon. She was not scheduled for a call here. But tramp traders often came in on a chance of picking up cargo or for a supply of fresh water.

"Hold out your hands, Conroy."

Larry saw that Tarsh had produced a pair of handcuffs. A moment more and he'd be wrist-bound. Manacled he'd be taken to Suva on two charges: the theft of twenty thousand dollars and the murder of Gannon. Even if they failed to convict him, Larry could see himself living out his life under a cloud.

Bitter rebellion, searing through Larry, broke all leashes of discretion. Instead of holding out his hands to be manacled, he lashed them both, clenched, at Tarsh's face. The fury of it was too sudden for Tarsh. His shot missed. A straight left smashed between his eyes; a right uppercut jolted his chin. The two punches toppled Tarsh senseless to the floor.

Larry took his gun, then stood back, breathing heavily. "I'm in deep, now," he thought. "I've got to beat it outa here on that tramp."

Perhaps they couldn't convict him on the murder charge. But definitely they could and would convict him on charges of resisting arrest and assaulting an officer of the crown.

Nothing to do but get out of here on that Swedish tramp. Larry lugged Tarsh to the couch. There he tied the man hand and foot. Also, using the handcuffs, he manacled a wrist to a post. Then he covered the window with a blanket so that no one could look in.

By that time Tarsh was coming to.

"Listen, Sarge. A native fisherman is bring me a bonito, about sundown. You can have him cut you loose. By then I'll be well to sea on that tramp."

Tarsh gave a hoarse shout.

"With the door and window closed, they can't hear you from the store," Larry suggested. "Besides, you told me Tama's taken every available native to probe in the swamp."

Tarsh subsided and Larry began packing his bags. A half-mile out in the lagoon, the tramp was now dropping anchor.

A BOAT came ashore with water kegs and a detail of the crew. Larry met them on the beach. They only wanted to fill water kegs, a Swedish bosun said. Larry pointed a mile down the shore to the mouth of a creek, and the boat oared off that way.

It meant that Larry would have two or three hours before the ship weighed anchor. So he decided to make use of them by looking for evidence in Gannon's quarters. The store was deserted, Tama being at the mid-island swamp.

Larry entered and went into Gannon's office. He knew that Gannon owned an automatic pistol. It had been kept in a certain desk drawer. Larry looked and the gun wasn't there. He reasoned that Gannon would hardly take that gun along on a peaceful trading trip to Oulima.

It made Larry all the more certain that the disappearance had been planned. Had Gannon arranged with some confederate to take him off in a launch? How could Gannon have kept in touch with an outside confederate?

Brooding over this, Larry's eye fell upon a stack of old Aukland *Heralds*. They recalled to him the ruse by which he himself had been compromised. The sheep-ranch-for-sale ad. It set ideas to sparking in Larry's brain. Why had Gannon been led to think of the classified-ad page of his paper for setting his trap?

Perhaps because he'd had another errand on that same page. The errand of keeping in touch with his confederate. Through the agony column! Such a scheme of communication wasn't uncommon. You put your ad in the personal column of a newspaper, where it conveys to someone a confidential message.

Larry took up the Aukland *Heralds*, issue by issue, and looked at the personal columns in each. Keeping patiently at it, he came to a page which had been thumbed more than any of the others. A splash of rum had fouled it, suggesting that Gannon might have brooded over it a long time.

In this column Larry saw an item:

> Frank:
> Will leave station 173 at dawn May 19th. Will arrive station 175 at ten P. M. same evening.
>
> Roy.

The "173" and "175" meant nothing to Larry. But he was impressed by the date, May 19th. May 19th was yesterday, the very day on which Gannon had disappeared from sight.

Larry's impulse was to rush with this clew to Tarsh. Maybe it would impress Tarsh, too. But halfway to the door, another thought checked Larry. Even if Tarsh did accept the ad as a message

from the fugtitive impostor, the man who had posed as "Inspector Sharkey," it wouldn't implicate Gannon any more than Conroy. For the message could have been addressed to Conroy just as well as to Gannon.

No, there was nothing to do except run. Tarsh had made up his stubborn British mind, and there was no use trying to win him over.

So Larry Conroy picked up his bags and went to a skiff on the beach. In this he rowed out to the Swedish tramp. On board, he went to the skipper's cabin to dicker for passage.

The skipper was occupied aft somewhere, and Larry sat down to wait. Then, on the cabin wall, he saw the usual nautical chart. A map of all the South Pacific.

Idly Larry ran his eye over it, noting the position of this island, Vita-Mauna. He'd need to slip ashore at the first port, disguise himself and then tranship. What would most likely be the next port? Would it be Apia, or Suva, or Papeete, or—

Suddenly Larry stood up with a new alertness, and stared at the chart. He saw that Meridian 175 split this island of Vita-Mauna. Then he saw that Meridian 173 just barely kissed the westerly tip of British Samoa, about 150 miles easterly from here. The message in the personal column flashed back to his mind. Someone had promised to leave 173 at dawn yesterday, May 19th, and arrive at 175 about fifteen hours later. That would be a speed of ten miles per hour, just about right for a motor launch!

Then Larry saw something else on the chart. It was a certain bold, diagonal line which passed between this position and Samoa. A new idea rocked Larry's brain. It made him change his mind about shipping out. He picked up his bags, hurried to the ladder, re-embarked in his skiff and rowed ashore.

IT WAS still only noon. Larry waited on the beach until he saw the tramp weigh anchor and put to sea.

Then he went into his shack to confront Tarsh. Tarsh, bound securely, was wriggling impotently on the couch.

"The ship's gone and I'm not on her," Larry announced. "Which ought to convince you I haven't got a bagful of loot. Right?"

Tarsh shook his head. "You found that the tramp carries wireless and so can be intercepted at sea. That's why you didn't go."

"She carries no wireless. But let it pass. I'm here to make you a sporting proposition, Tarsh."

"Some trick up your sleeve, what?"

"No tricks. The deal is this: I'll cut you loose if you agree not to lay a hand on me for twelve hours. At the end of twelve hours I'll give you back your gun, plus the shotgun, plus the handcuffs; and I'll promise not to resist if you want to put 'em on me."

"What's the game, Conroy?"

"No game at all, except I'm playing a long shot. I'm staking my freedom against a hunch I can solve this entire case, to your satisfaction, before midnight."

The sergeant's small black eyes searched him. "And what if I don't agree?"

"I'll keep you tied up till you do."

"Very well. I agree. Take off these blasted ropes." Tarsh kicked his legs savagely.

When Larry released him, he rose stiffly from the couch.

In mid-afternoon Larry took the path for Oulima. Tarsh's pistol and a flashlight were in his pockets and Gannon's pigeon gun was under his arm.

"Where you going?" Tarsh demanded.

"Trail along, if you like," Larry invited.

They struck the south shore at Oulima. From there Larry turned westerly along the shore until he came to a high cliff. He climbed to the summit of the cliff. Here was a good vantage point from which to see far along the waterline in either direction.

"What's the game?" Tarsh repeated.

"My bet is," Larry explained, "that Gannon had a date for ten o'clock last night. At that hour a boat was due to slip in and take him off the island."

Tarsh stared. "You're balmy, Conroy. You can't pull my leg like that."

"I know this island pretty well," Larry said. "Only strip of beach out of sight

from all native villages is between here and that next point to the west."

Night came on swiftly and dropped a curtain over the sea.

"Look for signal lights, Tarsh."

"It doesn't make sense," Tarsh protested. "If Gannon was taken off in a boat at ten o'clock last night, then we're twenty-four hours too late."

"That's exactly the way it figures," Larry admitted. "We're a night too late." Nevertheless he settled down to wait.

SHORTLY before ten o'clock they saw a flash somewhere out near the reef. A series of flashes followed. Then, at a cove to the west, a bonfire blazed.

"Let's close in, Sarge," Larry exulted. "And here's your gun. You might need it." He tossed a pistol to the astonished Tarsh.

They advanced, then, toward the bonfire. Nearing it, Larry heard a splash of oars. A small boat was coming ashore. A light far out indicated a larger boat standing by there.

A hail came from the beach: "Ahoy, Archie."

An answer from the boat: "Make ready to board, Gannon. Step lively."

The boat grated on sand. Larry made out a dim figure in it. A second figure loomed on the beach.

Larry cocked the shotgun and rushed them. "If you feel like it, start shooting," he yelled. "If you'd rather not, just hoist your hands."

Gannon made one choice and Archie Strawn made the other. Archie whirled and sent bullets streaming toward Larry. In the dark, Larry wasn't a good target. He cut loose with the shotgun at Archie's legs and saw the man jack-knife in the beached boat.

Tarsh charged in to club Gannon with the pistol.

Larry stepped into the boat and flashed a light on Archie Strawn. "Howdy, Inspector," he greeted. "What did you do with that twenty thousand pounds?"

Naturally it wasn't in the boat. Beyond doubt it had been stored in some safe place far away. Larry stooped to search Strawn and found a ring of keys. It gave him an idea.

With the ring of keys in hand, Larry rejoined Tarsh by the bonfire. There he examined each key carefully. One of them was clearly the key to a safety deposit box. On it was stamped: *Box 131; Aukland Trust Co.*"

"That's where he took it," Larry asserted, "straight south from Suva."

"See here," Tarsh protested, his wits still in a muddle. "You claimed this take-off was set for *last* night."

"It was, by Gannon's calendar," Larry admitted. "Archie promised to leave Samoa at dawn of the nineteenth and arrive here at ten the same evening. What's more, he arrived exactly on schedule."

"But blast it all, this is the twentieth!"

"It's the nineteenth in Samoa—and the twentieth at Vita-Mauna. Look at a chart, Sarge. At the International Date Line, which is at about Longitude 174 in these seas, Monday becomes Wednesday in a single tick of the clock."

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RIDDLE FOR A RED MAN

By L. L. FOREMAN

In the ravine, they paused to attend to three of them.

THE long lines of Sioux and Cheyennes, riding in all the splendid display of full war-dress, swept down on the Little Big Horn behind the eighty old warriors leading them, their paint-daubed ponies seeming to plunge on in wild uncontrol. Near the lip of the ridge they dragged abruptly to a sedate walk and finally halted, but the Seventh Cavalry, coming up over the high bluffs at a charge, drew up in a jump.

The two mounted forces confronted each other, hundreds on both sides, and silence settled after the pounding up-

roar while the dust boiled lazily through the drawn ranks. The brightly feathered heads of the Indians grew motionless, as stilled as the trim caps of the troopers. The five guidons of the Seventh Cavalry, with their name-emblazoned streamers, drooped languidly after their brave fluttering. The Indian ponies lost their wildness and began switching flies.

Bad Arrow unobtrusively shifted seat in his saddle, hoping the young men behind would not notice. He was very old, so old that his legs no longer took kindly the weight of his body, and the saddle had grown tetrribly hard. He watched as Chief White Bull rode forward alone, flaunting his famous war-bonnet, and he gave credit to White Bull for riding so well at his age, straight and dignified as a great chief should ride. The aged general of the Old Seventh detached himself from the cavalry columns and jogged forward to meet the chief, and they met before the monument on the hill. They gravely shook hands, and the vast crowd of spectators dutifully applauded this climax of the Custer Battlefield Semi-Centennial Peace Ceremonies.

Weariness ran heavily through Bad Arrow's old body. He sagged a little on his pony, and let his memory wander back fifty years and have its way. He could see from here, even with his filmy eyes, the spot where Crazy Heart had charged alone up the hill at the group of soldiers gathered around Long Hair Custer. Crazy Heart had been a brave man, but reckless. It had been he who stampeded the soldiers' horses with a bright red blanket . . . or had it been Lame Dog? Yes, it must have been Lame Dog, for Crazy Heart had died in his charge up the hill.

BAD ARROW'S memory cleared with the sight of the battlefield to aid it, and he could see it all again, the lines of puffing smoke, the runaway horses, the blue-shirted soldiers clotting together and breaking up again, the Indians flitting back and forth, shooting, darting in, cutting down the last fighting remnants of Long Hair Custer's command. Bad Arrow straightened again in his saddle, ghosts prodding his pride.

He had done his share that day, and more; had counted his coups and earned the right to thrust four straight feathers in his hair. Now he could see it all happening again, so clearly that it charmed him, and he could almost feel the fierce young hunger for glory. Details crowded and jostled in his mind, details that had a habit of escaping him when telling the story to young men in his tepee on the reservation. He was rich with recollections of small things long forgotten. Why, it was over there—there where those women now stood—that Red Eagle fought the big soldier and had to call for help. That had been funny. Red Eagle—he who boasted so of his strength and quickness—forced to call like a boy for help. Bad Arrow chuckled. He had never liked Red Eagle.

Memory of that other soldier forced itself upon him, though he didn't want it, for it brought an old irritation of puzzlement, an old question never answered. That other soldier—an officer—had put his pistol to his head and shot himself. Yes, he had shot himself and Bad Arrow saw it, and the question that such a strange act posed was an annoyance to him. He had never been able to solve it, and it had become a private old enemy that had him beaten.

It happened toward the end of the fight, after the soldiers on the hill failed to stand off the last charge and Long Hair Custer went down in the shrieking tangle. Here and there a few isolated soldiers broke from wherever they had held cover, fighting desperately to gain the shelter of the tall cottonwood clumps, there by the river below the bluffs. Two of them made it to the ridge, two officers who had caught a buckskin horse, and they dropped into that ravine yonder, whence they could work their way down to the cottonwoods and the river.

Both were tall, yellow-haired men, with the hard look of courage on them. Bad Arrow saw them shoot down two Cheyennes and a Sans Arc Sioux who rushed the ravine, and at once he desired a pair of yellow scalps and a buckskin horse. He started for the ravine and cried out to Bear Paw, his cousin: "Bear Paw, I call on a brave man to come with me!"

They reached the ravine at a point above where the two officers were still shooting, taking advantage of cover on the way. They hugged the ground getting there, keeping in mind the fate of the two Cheyennes and the Sans Arc Sioux. Even so, the shooting was very hot and close, and Bad Arrow had his war-charm pouch shot away, the serious loss of which might have faltered his courage had he been less eager. Later it cost him two ponies which he had to pay to the shaman for a new charm.

Bear Paw wondered aloud why the two officers stood their ground instead of trying to make their way on down to the river with the buckskin. The horse looked like a good one, he said, though blood marked its flank. But Bad Arrow refused to speculate, having learned that to speculate at such a time was dangerous to one's courage. He led the way on down the crooked ravine, came in sight of the two officers, and it was then that the one with the pistol shot himself. He saw it plainly. The other, after a strange look at the fallen man, dragged himself onto the buckskin and clattered down the ravine. Bad Arrow fired after him, but missed, and Bear Paw did no better.

When they reached the dead man both made to strike coup on him, but paused together in indecision. They had not killed the man, either of them. He had died by his own hand, and they felt that they could not honorably count coup in such an extraordinary circumstance. They were puzzled, and somewhat aggrieved.

"He was a coward," accused Bear Paw angrily, fingering his coup stick.

Bad Arrow disagreed. "He looked like a brave man. He fought like a brave man. And," he pointed out, "he did not fear death or he would not have done this thing."

"Perhaps he feared we might torture him," Bear Paw suggested contemptuously, but it was evident that he did not really think so, and neither did Bad Arrow. The pony-soldiers had surely learned that Sioux warriors rarely descended to such childish amusements. Besides, today no prisoners were being taken, and the soldiers knew it.

It was very puzzling. Bad Arrow gazed down at the dead body, wondering. The man had with cool efficiency shot himself rather than fight on or try to escape with that other one. Yet he had been a brave man and a fighter, no doubt of that. Bad Arrow wondered what manner of answer there could be to such a riddle.

IN the years to come, after the surrender on the Yellowstone and the trek to Fort Bennett, the Agency, and a more or less restricted mode of living, Bad Arrow was to spend much otherwise unoccupied time in pondering over that puzzle, there being little else left for a warrior to do but sit in the sun and recall a more glorious past. It became a ghost thought, haunting him. White men, he knew, were prone to do senseless things at times, but that soldier had been a fighting man, like himself, and when two men were brothers of the same trade it did seem as if they could meet on a higher ground of mutual understanding. Eventually he decided that the question was quite unanswerable, an enigma born of the mysterious motives of an illogical paleface, and an unsatisfying thing to brood upon. It defeated him.

Yet there was an answer to it, of course, and you could say that it began back in Dakota, where Captain Montry and Lieutenant Costigan scandalously drew swords over a girl, right in the officers' quarters of Fort Lincoln. But it goes farther back than that, to a Louisiana plantation where Costigan was the son of the field boss and Montry was the son of the owner.

They didn't ever really hit it off very well, the two boys, and that was mostly Costigan's fault. Costigan could have got along fine with Young Montry, if Montry had been, say, the son of a tenant cropper. Montry was a grand and daring rider, an excellent shot, and good company. But he was the son of the owner, a gentleman, and lived in the big house. He had a provoking way of doing the right thing, immediately and easily, without any premeditation, as if no other possible course occurred to him.

Costigan resented these things with

all his rebel's heart. Underlying his resentment, of course, smouldered angry ambition to be like Montry.

They had their first fight the summer Montry came home early from West Point because his father was ill, when they got to talking and somehow drifted into the dangerous subject of what made a gentleman. Both should have known better, and did, and Montry would have liked to back out, but Costigan had developed a roaring rebelliousness after talking to himself all winter.

"Would you say, for instance, you'd still be a gentleman without the big house and your father's money and West Point and all that?"

Montry considered it briefly and nodded. "Yes, I think so," he answered, honestly but somewhat uncomfortably, and at once saw that he was being led into a trap.

Costigan asked next, deliberately persistent: "Why? Because you were born that way? Huh! 'Cording to that, then—'cording to your claim—I couldn't ever come up to you because I ain't got the blood in me you got. That it?"

The furious hurt of it, the hopelessness and the challenge of it, made him ugly and truculent. "So it's like I'm a work horse and you're a Morgan saddler, huh?" he pursued, and his face went white. "Nobody ever's going to take me for a Morgan saddler, because I was born just a work horse. That right?"

They were both quite young and uncompromising, and the matter was a serious one to Costigan. "That right?" he demanded again, and his tone cut through Montry's courteous good humor. Montry fixed a cool stare on him and nodded.

Then Costigan took his hands out of his pockets, and they went to it. It proved nothing, except that both could take a beating and give one. That night, Costigan was marched up to the big house by his father, a hard and capable man who stalked behind his battered son with a horsewhip and proposed to lay it on him for the outrage. But Montry laughed the whole thing away, took the blame, and offered to match coins with Costigan to see who should get the whipping. Such graceful clemency increased Costigan's angry ambition, for Costigan felt that Montry had thereby scored another deft victory over him. He would rather have taken the whipping and kept his pride.

AFTER Montry's father died, Montry found he owned considerably less than he had expected, so he sold out to a northern company and went back to West Point. The new owners promoted Costigan's father to manager and allowed him to occupy the big house. Costigan lived in it for a while, but the pleasure was empty of real satisfaction, with Montry away at West Point learning to be an army officer. So Costigan went off and joined the cavalry, with the object of becoming a general or something and shining it over Montry some day.

They met in the same troop. Costigan made a tough and able soldier, and he wore a sergeant's chevrons when Montry cropped up as a pleb lieutenant. It was inevitable that they should clash again, and this time it happened during the first Yellowstone expedition against the Sioux.

Montry had command of a squadron, scouting miles ahead for a route, and Costigan rode under him. Near the mouth of Tongue River the squadron unsaddled to wait for the main column to come up, and soon five mounted Sioux warriors dashed out from a skirt of timber to stampede the horses. A burst of shots drove the warriors off, but they got away with a number of the horses and headed back with them for the timber up along the high riverbank, howling insults, firing off their guns, and riding prankish circles behind the captured horses. The insolent daring of the raid brought an eruption of gritty swearing from the soldiers.

Now, Montry was an honor product of West Point, but this Indian fighting was still somewhat new to him. As soon as the squadron could saddle the remaining horses he moved in pursuit, directing Costigan to remain in camp with those men left afoot. Costigan didn't like that at all, and wished to make known his views, but Montry galloped

off briskly with the mounted part of the squadron.

"We'll talk it over when I return, Sergeant," he called back, and his cool glance promised a reprimand. Costigan was developing the pernicious habit of questioning Montry's commands, and it was high time for direct talk between them.

Costigan stood scowling, watching him ride off, and half of his mind hoped that Montry wouldn't ride into bad trouble, while the other half hoped he would. Those five Sioux raiders behaved provocatively enough to be decoys, and the timbered bank completely hid that part of the river bottom. By habit, Costigan took note of the sand hills and the lay of them, half a mile below the river. If Montry ran into more than he could handle, he could always retreat to those rolling hills. Better than making a run all the way back here to the camp, and a choice spot to stand off assault if outnumbered.

A short minute after Montry and the squadron rode over the timbered bank, heavy firing exploded along the river bottom and with it the shrill whooping of many more than five Sioux. Costigan looked to his pistol and carbine, methodically making certain that they were fully loaded, and the men left afoot with him did the same. He sent a swift look about him, decided to abandon the few saddles and bits of gear, and uttered words in the curt, calm tone that helped to make him a capable sergeant.

"Ready? Keep together till we reach the bank, then spread out, single line formation. All right . . . Forward."

Leading them across the flat land at a steady trot, he swore deep down and quietly, seeing lean and head-feathered shapes spill from the sand hills on the right, loping on foot and sinisterly silent. He estimated the force at around two hundred, and probably another two hundred in the river bottom in front of Montry and the squadron. Four hundred against eighty, and the eighty in a poor position. The Sioux had rigged up a neat one this time, as neat as the Fort Phil Kearny massacre. First the daring decoys, enticing pursuit into a hot ambush, then the final flanking by another hidden force to cut off all escape. Clever and well-executed. Probably the work of Crazy Horse. Some of those loping devils looked like Oglalas, by their headdresses. Costigan gave due credit and respect to Crazy Horse as a cunning strategist, and hoped he'd have the chance to kill the famous war-chief.

He remembered to rescind his former command. "Keep together all the way, boys, but don't pack too close," he called out, and went up the bank at a run. The sand hill Indians were still too far off for accurate range, and he barked reproval at a trooper for wasting two shots at them. There would be hard necessity for every ball before this was over.

HE found Montry on the edge of timber nearest the river, shooting off his pistol as coolly as if practicing on the fort range. Montry had kept the squadron together well, placing it in the best order —single line, dismounted, the horses held well back in the timber—and there was no panic. The Sioux were mostly down along the river, firing from the cover of the cut-bank, but some were ranging through the woods, and a chosen force of honored warriors, mounted and ready for the grand charge, waited high up on top of the opposite bank across the shallow river. Costigan revised his previous estimate, raising it to six hundred. He took a stand by Montry, took a shot at a feathered head down by the cut-bank, and was pleased to see the head jerk backward.

"You're flanked," he said. "About two hundred more coming from the sand hills back of us." He spoke with dry matter-of-factness that was faintly insolent, purposely, as to one of equal rank who had pulled an error. "What d'you aim to do now?" he asked.

Montry betrayed no personal feeling of annoyance, except that his own tone was metallic as he gave crisp orders. "Have the men mount at once, Sergeant, those that have horses. We move at once against the force in front, cross the river and engage that mounted party up there on the bank."

Costigan batted his eyes. "It's slaughter," he said. "We'll never reach the top

of that bank. These Sioux don't run when they're up on ponies. They come and meet you. Now, my idea is to—"

"I have reason to believe, Sergeant," said Montry, "that you heard my order. Obey, please."

"It's slaughter," Costigan repeated, and now he spoke through his teeth. Quite suddenly, this had become a personal issue between him and Montry, and the fight was secondary. He was no longer the good soldier, the tough and capable sergeant, but a rebel full of angry ambition.

Montry turned deliberately and faced him. "Sergeant Costigan, you apparently forget that you are speaking to a superior officer and that I am in command of this squadron. Consider yourself under arrest."

Costigan stared silently at him. His face whitened. Saying no word more, he struck his right fist with all his strength at the coolly dispassionate face before him.

He did not know how long it was that he stood gazing benumbedly down at Montry lying tumbled and senseless at the foot of the tree that had been his cover. Slowly, he raised his head and looked about him, almost dazed by the thing that he had done, but it had passed unnoticed, every man too intent upon his own desperate problem of life and death. The fight and the urgency of the situation pressed through the crumbling barriers of dead passion and rushed into his mind. Indians roving through the woods, pot-shotting, growing bolder, more slipping up to join them from the cut-bank. Picked warriors up there on the opposite bank, arrogant with violence, waiting to charge down and kill. Two hundred more coming to flank the trapped squadron. The sand hills the only defensible position, and the two hundred lined between it and the squadron.

Sergeant Costigan rapped his commands, curtly, calmly. "Let some of those horses go—ten or fifteen. Head 'em for the river and stampede 'em. Good. Now, every other man get back and mount. Easy, there. Take it easy. The rest keep cover. Hold it, now, and stand steady. Shockley, come here and help me with the lieutenant. He's . . . been hurt."

The released horses, already frightened and rearing, bolted in a body toward the river, shied off at the cut-bank, and scattered in panic when half-naked shapes sprang up to snatch at the trailing reins. Costigan watched, his face impassive but with eagerness racing through him. You could always depend upon Indians temporarily leaving off a fight to chase a good horse. They didn't share their loot, generally. Each laid claim to and kept whatever he could get, and they had long learned to covet the mounts of the pony-soldiers.

MORE Indians were bounding up, many recklessly exposing themselves to run down the loose horses. Costigan called out imperatively, and had five more turned loose. Now every Indian along the cut-bank and in the woods was chasing horses, and some were quarreling noisily over caught and plunging animals. Even the mounted warriors up on the high bank yonder were growing restless, fired by the primitive impulse to gather the best loot of all. One of the horses dodged an encircling group and went splashing across the river, and the warriors crowded forward to the bank's edge to watch. It gained their side and took off at a slant up the bank, and that was too much for Sioux discipline. The warriors broke ranks and a wild run began, each straining to be the one to catch the animal when it reached the top. Soldiers in a trap could be killed at leisure, but horses were important and precious. A warrior's reputation rested largely on the number of horses he captured.

"Boys!" Costigan's calm voice rang out again. "Boys, we're getting out of here. Our objective is those sand hills way back of us. Got to break through some Injuns getting there, but they're afoot and armed light. Those of you riding, take the lead and cover the advance of those afoot. Those afoot —run. McCrory, help Shockley with the lieutenant."

He loaded up his pistol and carbine, saw Montry lifted up by McCrory and Shockley, and gave a yank to his hat

brim. "Keep together, boys. Yell like hell, hit 'em hard, and don't stop till you reach those hills. Ready? Forward."

They were holed up in the sand hills, standing off all attacks, when the long black ribbon of the main column dusted into sight toward sundown. Eleven men and thirty-seven horses lost. Costigan was taken up next morning before the brevet major general commanding.

Eleven men and thirty-seven horses. Maybe they wouldn't have been lost if Lieutenant Montry had led his charge across the river and up the bank. Maybe the whole squadron would have been wiped out; or maybe the Sioux would have run. There was no way of knowing, inasmuch as he, Sergeant Costigan, had knocked Lieutenant Montry cold in a personal feud and taken over command. Costigan expected to be court-martialed and shot for that, and to himself he admitted that he deserved it.

The blue eyes of General George Armstrong Custer were quietly inscrutable, giving Costigan no inkling of whatever mood might lie behind them. They were wise eyes, the eyes of a man who could gently fondle a pet dog while he plotted a smashing campaign, and write a whimsical letter about that same dog a few hours after leading a successful charge. Under an aquiline nose, the heavy cavalry mustache partly hid a mouth that was sensitive and fierce. It was rumored that the general wrote poetry and loved flowers. It was known positively by every man in his command that he had won the Civil War, would eventually subdue every bad Indian on the plains, and stood ready to hand out hard justice to any soldier under him who fell short of reasonable perfection.

"Lieutenant Montry has made his report to me, Sergeant," said General Custer, and behind him Montry eyed Costigan with no particular expression.

The general went on to say that he always expected a high standard of conduct on the part of his non-commissioned officers, that he watched over them perhaps more closely than was generally realized, and that he was therefore not unaware of Sergeant Costigan's past record and behavior. He could not say that he was greatly surprised by Lieutenant Montry's report, but he was moved to comment upon one aspect of it. When a squadron commander became incapacitated while in action with the enemy, as had happened, it was to be expected that his sergeant should take command and do his best until relieved by another superior officer. But in this case it had brought out a notable element.

"Your maneuver was quite masterly, Sergeant," said the general, "and in my opinion it saved the entire squadron from annihilation." He added that he was quite in accord with Lieutenant Montry, who had suggested that such a capable commander and strategist should try for an officer's commission. The general then shook hands with Costigan, and told him to see him again when the summer campaign was over. Montry dropped his gravity and winked at Costigan as if they shared a pretty good joke on General Custer. Costigan walked off in a fog, marveling at the lengths to which a gentleman would go, but trying to convince himself that he would have done the same.

THEY met again in the Seventh, at Fort Lincoln, Costigan a lieutenant and Montry a captain. They bowed, grinned, shook hands very warmly, and both fell in love with the new colonel's daughter. The old enmity soon flared up again, and this time they had something really tangible to fight over.

Rita Jerome was pretty and kind, so kind that she shrank from hurting either of them. She was equally nice to both, balanced her favors between them, and loved the dark young adjutant of Company B, a fact known to everybody except Lieutenant Costigan and Captain Montry. Everybody wondered how it would come out. In an army post, miles from anywhere, you had to keep your mind exercised somehow or take to drink, and speculations about your neighbors did well to work on. A love tangle was the best, and here was a meaty one, for both Costigan and Montry were known to be forthright and active men.

During one of the regular Friday night dances they retired to the privacy of their quarters and had it out, at first

with grave delicacy, finally with quick blood and blunt words. "Miss Rita," stated Montry tightly, "is a lady. Costigan, I ask that you cease paying so much public attention to her."

"Why should I?" demanded Costigan.

"I happen to know something of your private life," said Montry.

"What's wrong with my private life?" snapped Costigan. There was a good deal wrong with it, but he was in the mood to take issue with Montry on any point.

Montry then mentioned a few facts that were common knowledge, concerning Lieutenant Costigan's reputation for making the most of his furloughs, and ended with what could be construed as a warning. "Rather than risk harm coming to Miss Rita," he said, "I would take action to forestall it."

He was going on to say more, but Costigan pointed briefly to Montry's sword and touched the hilt of his own. Costigan's face was white. "I suggest," he pronounced carefully, choosing the right words, "that we meet behind the company stables. In fifteen minutes."

But there again Montry proved he was what he was, doing the proper thing instead of losing his temper. "The whole post would know why we fought. It would create very unpleasant notoriety for the lady," he said quietly and coldly, and Costigan, knowing he had made a fool of himself, lost all control.

"By the devil, I'll make you fight!" he swore, and then Montry had to draw, for Costigan was coming at him.

The savage ring of the blades brought everybody running, and the fight was stopped before it drew blood. Later, up before his colonel, Costigan took all blame and mentioned that he had been drinking, which did not excuse him in the colonel's eyes. Montry insisted that he, himself, had gone too far, and declared simply that he would have no alternative but to resign his commission if Costigan were made the sole culprit. That further angered the colonel, for both officers were good men and he had no desire to lose them. Fortunately or otherwise, orders had just come for the summer campaign against the Sioux, so the colonel grumbled darkly that the matter would have to stand suspended.

IT IS pretty certain that Sitting Bull and his war-chiefs expected trouble on the Little Big Horn, though they didn't make any particular plans about meeting it. The Sioux and the Cheyennes were in camp when the first column showed up, and General Custer led the attack on the ridge. The general had previously split his force into three parts, each to attack from a different quarter. Theoretically, the Indians should have run or been trapped, but what the general didn't know was that a greater force of warriors had lately joined the camp—Cheyenne, Sans Arc, Hunkpapa, Minniconju, Oglala, Brulé—seasoned fighters, war-proud and bold over their victory of a week ago, when they had beaten back the Fort Fetterman troops on the Rosebud. The warriors figured that what could be done once could be done again, and they had the numbers and nerve to try it.

In less than an hour every man in the command knew that he was fighting for his life with a slim chance of keeping it. There were just too many Indians, swarms of them, well-armed and all keen with the fighting edge.

Costigan, whose horse had been stampeded, was racing on foot to join Custer in his stand on the hill. Shooting it out with a howling mad Sioux who sought to ride him down, he got his eye on a runaway buckskin horse that had so far evaded capture. A mob of Indians stormed the hill ahead of him, seeming to pour up out of the earth. They swamped Custer's party, and Costigan altered his course to run down the buckskin. With Custer down and the battle hopelessly lost, it was time for a man to consider his own life and see about salvaging it from the massacre.

Montry appeared from somewhere, all bloody from a neck wound, running for the same horse. Both men closed in on the trembling buckskin and raced with it for the ravine, with two Cheyennes and a Sioux hot after them. In the ravine they paused to attend to the three, and then turned to the buckskin.

They bumped into each other. Montry drew back after a very short hesitation. "Go ahead . . . Good luck," he

said, and whipped shots with his rifle at a pair of Sioux snaking for the ravine.

Costigan jammed cartridges into his empty pistol. Sweat ran down into his eyes, for it was a hot and windless day, and he sleeved it away to send a look at Montry. And suddenly he laughed, his eyes brittle-bright and the skin of his jaw drawn tight. "I'll be eternally cussed," he said, "if you out-gentleman me this time. Get on that horse, damn your Louisiana soul, and get the hell out o' here!"

Montry stared, and then he grinned a comrade's grin. "We'll both ride, soldier. Come on."

Costigan jerked his head impatiently. "Horse couldn't make it. Damn Injuns could ride rings around us. Get going. Those two Sioux are coming down for our hair, and they got good guns."

"No better than mine," said Montry, and he took aim up along the crooked ravine, waiting for the two Sioux to show themselves. "You might as well take the horse, and quick about it. Some of them are coming back down the hill this way. I'll try to hold them up till you make the river."

His obstinacy, that calm obstinacy that ran as deep and inflexible as his breeding, brought fear to Costigan, the fear that he was to be outdone again, with nevermore an opportunity to settle the old score. The angry ambition blazed again, this time too overpowering to allow for any failure.

"As one gentleman to another," Montry added, keeping his right eye along the rifle sights, "I'd like to apologize to you for some of my remarks back at—"

"As one gentleman to another," Costigan broke in swiftly, "I bid thee a sweet farewell and be damned to you. S'long soldier, and give my love to Rita if you see her."

He turned the pistol in his hand . . .

THE great peace ceremony ended, but Bad Arrow remained back in that day, his aroused old wonder as alive now as it was then. He slumped in his saddle, riding homeward with the rest, too weary to care if the strong young men noted his weakness of body. He was heavy with years, and soon he would join all those ones who had long gone—Bear Paw, Red Eagle, Crazy Heart, Crazy Horse, Lame Dog, Sitting Bull, all of them. Perhaps the white men would be there, too. Curious that such a thought had not occurred to him before. He pondered on it. Yes, perhaps they would be there. Perhaps some day there would be a great gathering together like this one today, with talk of old fights and a matching of coups.

Perhaps he would meet that one, that officer, and learn from him the answer to the riddle why he had killed himself. They would talk it over, warrior to warrior, and laugh at the thing that had puzzled him for so long.

Bad Arrow smiled in anticipation, and a woman passing in an automobile turned to her companion. "My dear, will you look at that old villain," she exclaimed. "What a perfectly savage grin! Heaven knows what he's thinking about. You know, Indians are always such a puzzle . . ."

EAST OF THE WILLIWAW

By

LESLIE T. WHITE

A STORY OF THE LAND OF FIRE

STRANDED at the bottom of the world in Punta Arenas—or Magalhães, as the natives call it— I, JEFFREY WYNN, American, had no way to get across the Straits of Magellan to Tierra del Fuego, somewhere in whose uncharted fastnesses lay La Querancia, the vast island ranch of my uncle, MIKE REYNOLDS and his partner, CAPTAIN NELS LUNDSTROM. I could find no one who knew the twisting channels to the estancia. Mike's business agent, a Straits Pilot, away on a job, had left a brief note saying my uncle's body had been found in the sea by fishermen, and that Lundstrom sailed from the ranch with a load of beef but never arrived.

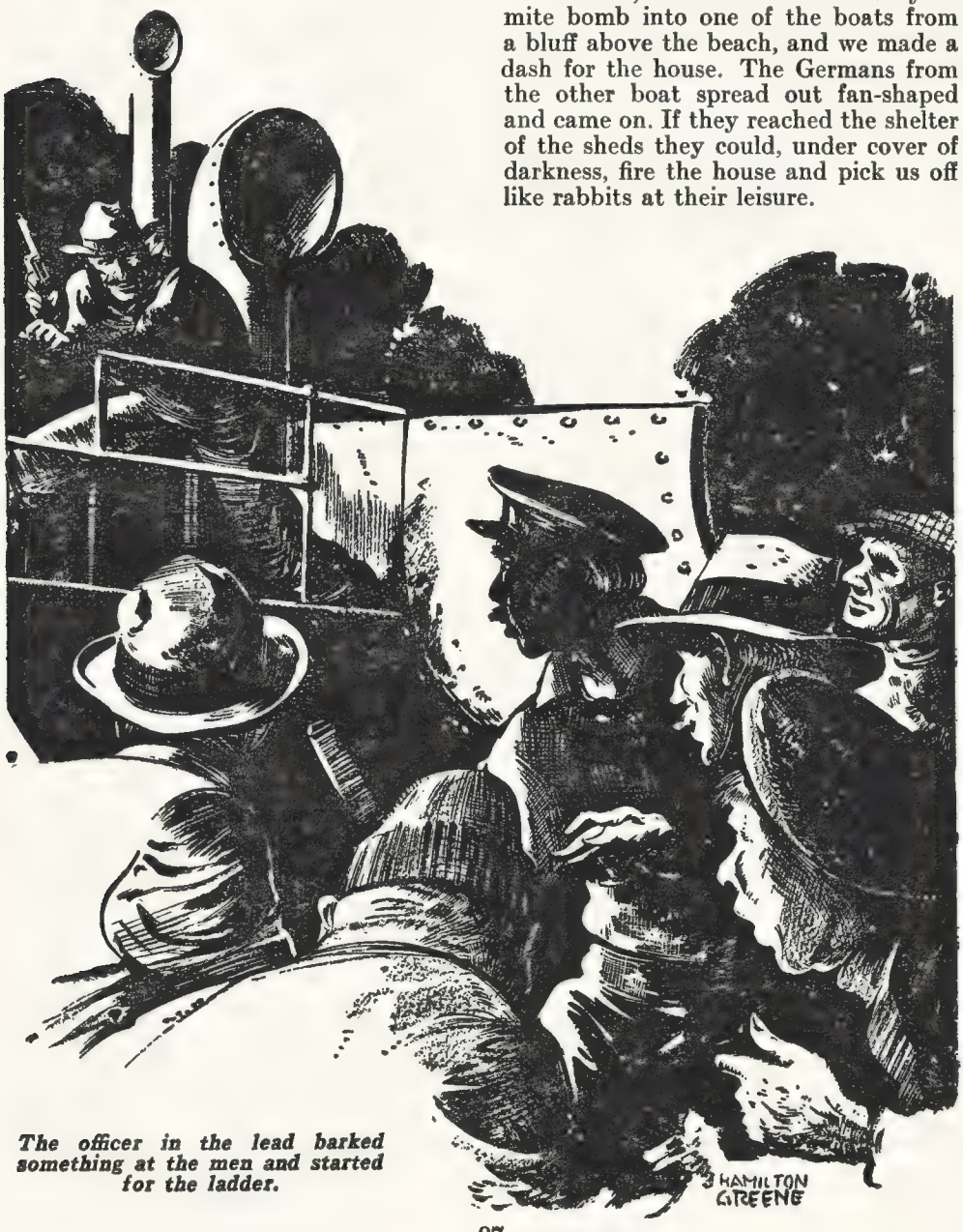
I got embroiled in a brawl between British sailors and seamen from a German tanker which was in the neighborhood to refuel the Nazi pocket battleship, *Admiral Schneider,* known to be hiding somewhere in the Straits. A German sportsman, KURT FABER, saved me from a bad beating and offered to fly me in his private plane across to the ranch. When we landed there—after running into a williwaw, one of the dreaded sea-going tornadoes peculiar to the region—we were welcomed by HENRY HIGGINS, major domo of the estancia, DAME SARAH MONTAGU, the housekeeper, and SHIRLEY, Lundstrom's lovely daughter. I told them of Mike Reynolds' death and learned Lundstrom was still missing.

MATÉ COCIDO, a devil-may-care gaucho, and his band of "gulfers"—fugitives from the Fuegian penal colony—galloped up to the ranch. Instead of coming to raid for cattle, as we feared at first, they brought a wounded man, LIEUTENANT CROMWELL of His Majesty's Royal Navy, who had escaped from imprisonment aboard the *Admiral Schneider.* Cromwell told us Shirley's father was safe, a prisoner on the sea-raider, after a fight in which the Nazi war vessel had tried to confiscate his load of beef, then blown up his ship when the stubborn Captain Lundstrom had resisted. There were a couple hundred other prisoners aboard the pocket battleship, victims of her various forays. Cromwell was anxious to get word to the British squadron stationed at the Falklands so it could attack the Nazi vessel. Shirley, fearful for her father's safety, tried to dissuade him but he insisted. The *Admiral Schneider* had already done incalculable damage and

must be caught before she could do more, despite personal considerations.

Kurt Faber, who had revealed anti-Nazi sympathies, offered to fly Cromwell to Punta Arenas but the officer was too weak to make the trip. Faber and I went instead. Flying above the channel the German proved himself in reality a Nazi spy when he spoke to the German tanker by radio, and gave her the position of the ranch. I forced him to fly back to La Querancia at the point of a revolver, but the damage was done. We put Faber under guard and prepared for attack.

That evening two boats from the tanker attempted to land. They had machine-guns protected by metal shields. We had dug a trench but there was danger of their outflanking us. PEPE, one of our men, tossed a home-made dynamite bomb into one of the boats from a bluff above the beach, and we made a dash for the house. The Germans from the other boat spread out fan-shaped and came on. If they reached the shelter of the sheds they could, under cover of darkness, fire the house and pick us off like rabbits at their leisure.



The officer in the lead barked something at the men and started for the ladder.

The balled ends of the bola stood taut like a three-pronged star.

PART III.

THE Germans could not have been more than thirty feet from the shelter of the sheds when I heard a shrill exclamation from Sarah Montagu.

"Look! Look!"

Maté Cocido and his gulfers came riding out of the hills on either side of the slope, low on their saddles so that in silhouette they looked like black centaurs. I saw lances glint in the dying sun, heard the savage shout. I saw the dappled stallion in the lead, tail streaming, mane erect like a guiding fin. They caught the Nazis in the open between them, rode pell-mell through the ranks, screaming and lashing out with their bolas.

The gulfers rode through their own ranks, swerved their horses and went dashing back across the slope again from either side. And when they swept off the field, half a dozen Nazis were down, and the others were in full flight to their boats.

Then Maté Cocido rode after the retreating seamen alone. The German officer stopped and emptied his Luger at the gray stallion, then started to run again. He had almost reached the boat, when Maté Cocido stood up in his stirrups. He shook out his heavy bola, grasped one ball in his right hand and started to swing it above his head to gain momentum, as a cowboy whirls a lariat. . . .

He let it go!

The three balled ends of the bola stood taut on their leather lines an equal distance apart, like a three-pronged star. It revolved slowly as it hurtled through the air.

The German officer was running at top speed. The leather thong of one ball struck his legs and at once the others wrapped themselves around him, like the embrace of a giant octopus. He was thoroughly trussed before he hit the ground.

Maté Cocido's horse stood on its hind legs, pawing at the air. The gaucho waved to us and dismounted. My men started to fire at the Germans piling into the boat, but I stopped them. There had been enough bloodshed. I ran down the slope.

Maté Cocido was standing above the cursing German, laughing at him. He evidently regarded the whole escapade as a huge joke. In that I could not share his view. He stooped and picked up the Luger the Nazi had dropped.

"I keep this," he grinned at me.

I was stumped. He had undoubtedly saved our lives, but he had enjoyed the fight so completely that I hardly knew how to go about thanking him.

"You came just in time," I said.

He looked at me, and his eyes danced. "We sit up on hill and admire your cows. You have leetle trouble it seem. I say to my crazy gauchos, 'We can steal cows any time. Let us have fun now. *Vamos!*' So, *zaz!*— We come."

This was hardly the time to argue about his cattle stealing.

"Well, thanks anyhow," I said.

The German officer was pretty badly shaken up. We rolled him over until Maté Cocido untangled the bola, and then we stood him on his feet. Higgins joined us. Three of the sailors were dead. Four others were badly battered. Our men had herded them into one of the sheds.

I looked at the officer. He was a heavy-set man with close-cropped blond hair and a flat, scarred face. His eyes were abnormally small and very round. Now they were bloodshot.

"Geev heem to my men," Maté Cocido suggested. "They make game weeth heem."

"No," I said. "He's going to answer some questions."

The German snarled, "Pig!" and spat in my face.

Higgins had been standing to one side. He leaned over and slashed the Nazi across the head with the barrel of his gun. The man dropped like a limp rope.

"That was for Benito!" Higgins said coldly.

"No more of that!" I warned the cockney. "Put him under guard with the other Nazis. Make sure they can't escape. Then come up to the house."

Maté Cocido had looped his bola around his waist. He fell into step beside me as I headed for the house. The big stallion followed close behind him, dog-like. The sun had dropped beyond the hills, and there was a peculiar purple quality to the afterglow. The rowels on the gaucho's spurs tinkled like tiny silver bells as they raked the ground.

I felt something had to be said. "You pulled us out of a bad jam," I told him gratefully.

Maté Cocido laughed softly. "Eet was good sport, lak w'en I was in thee army." He chuckled. "I make cavalry soldiers out of them crazy thieves of mine. *Si.*"

"You were in the army then?"

He shrugged and changed the subject. "You 'ave plenty nice cows, señor."

"Do you want some cattle?"

He made a deprecatory gesture. "*Perdone usted.* Pardon me, señor, but already I tak' one, maybe two leetle cows." Then he roared with laughter and walked away.

CHAPTER X

A CAKE WITH A SOFT INSIDE

LATER IN the evening I talked with Cromwell. The shooting had almost given him a relapse. When I told him what had happened, he shook his head and tossed on the bed.

"It's frightful!" he fumed. "All this petty brawling while the *Admiral Schneider* is somewhere close by. That's the important thing, man!"

The death of Benito passed through my mind. "Look here, Lieutenant," I grumbled. "I'm interested primarily in keeping this estancia in existence. This isn't my war."

He pushed himself up in bed and sat there, propped up on his elbows.

"Don't fool yourself, Wynn," he argued. "Can't you see why that raider must be wiped out? Look at it this way—if anything happens to the Panama Canal, the Straits of Magellan and the Cape Horn track are the only possible passages between the Atlantic and the Pacific."

"But my country is not at war."

He grimaced impatiently. "That makes no difference. The important thing is to keep the seas open. One pocket battleship could harass a whole fleet making an inter-ocean passage through these waters. Mark my words, the decisive naval battle of this world war may very well be fought in this region. Think of that, man!"

"Well, I don't see what I can do about it," I said.

Cromwell sank against the pillow. "It's the opportunity of a lifetime," he groaned. "And I'm done in."

"What could you do?" I said.

"If we could only keep the tanker from making contact with the *Admiral Schneider,*" he fretted. "I know she's short of fuel—that's her greatest problem. If we could delay that, we'd cut down her raids on convoys and shipping. It might even keep her bottled up here until we could get word to the fleet. . . ."

Jeff Wynn

"We'll get you over to Punta Arenas somehow," I assured him. "As soon as you get on your feet." I left him then and went down stairs.

I was worried about the gulfers. Although I was eternally grateful for what Maté Cocido had done this afternoon, I didn't like the idea of having his gang camped on the property. Any hopes that they might have gone, however, were blasted when I walked into the big room and found Maté Cocido and Higgins with Shirley and Sarah Montagu.

The old lady sat with hands folded on the head of her cane. "Well, Jeffrey," she said pointedly, "I hope you have some suggestions to offer before those Germans come back again."

Higgins shook his head. "Beggin' your pardon, ma'am, but I 'ave strong doubts they'll come back for a while h'at least."

"What do you know about it, you fool?" sniffed Sarah Montagu. "You said yourself the officer we captured was first mate on the tanker. You don't think the captain will just abandon him, do you?"

The fight had apparently uncovered some of Henry Higgins' latent independence. "Aye, ma'am. The 'Einie skipper knows 'is important job is to get fuel oil to the warship. 'E won't be worryin' about no bloody myte."

Tonita padded silently into the room and whispered something to the old lady. Aunt Sarah snorted, and thumped her cane. "Oh, he does, does he!" she jeered. Then to me, "His Lordship Faber desires an audience, Jeffrey."

"O. K.," I said. "Higgins—go up and help Pillo bring him down."

Higgins left the room. Aunt Sarah made an impatient little clucking noise with her tongue. "I wish that man wasn't in the house," she grumbled. "He's worse than a rattlesnake. I can't stand the sight of him."

Maté Cocido laughed and slapped his leg with his quirt. "*Caray!* He is loco, señora!"

THE door opened and Faber marched stiffly into the room, close-heeled by Pillo, who resembled a large chimpanzee, and old Higgins. Faber strutted across the room and bowed curtly.

"You wanted something?" I prompted him.

Faber said: "Jeffrey Wynn, I will offer you one more chance to give up this idiotic resistance. If you surrender at once, I can still promise none of you will be harmed."

"Is that all, Faber?"

He put his hands to his sides, clicked his heels, and bowed. The thing would have been comic under different circumstances. Herr von Faber was so imbued with his militaristic philosophy he believed it impressive.

Maté Cocido roared with laughter. He reached over and poked the German in the ribs with the silver head of his quirt.

"*Champon!*" he chuckled, winking at me. "Thee clown he ees serious, señor. A fighting cock, non? Geef heem to my brave *bandidos*, señor. I beg of you."

I saw the color flood Faber's face. His eyes turned to ice. Something of what he was thinking showed in his face. He

could take insults from another officer, like Cromwell, but he considered the gulfer an inferior and a peasant. Before I could interfere, he stepped over and slashed the gaucho across the face with the back of his hand.

The blow left a red mark. I jumped forward, expecting the gaucho to pull his gun. But Maté Cocido tilted his head and laughed, as though a child had struck him.

Faber turned livid. "If you were a gentleman," he managed between his teeth, "I could meet you on the field of honor!"

The gaucho gave him a cold smile. "Perhaps it could be arranged, señor." He pointed to a pair of sabers crossed on the wall above the fireplace. "Maybe those would please you, señor peeg?"

Faber bowed. "Excellent!" he snapped. "If some of you will act—"

I cut him off. "There'll be none of that nonsense," I told them. "Faber, I have just one thing to say to you. If your friends come back to La Querancia again, I'm going to put a revolver muzzle at the base of your skull. If one of my men gets so much as a scratch, I'll blow your damned head off! Is that clear?"

Faber sneered at me. "You cannot frighten a German officer," he boasted.

"Take him back," I told Higgins. "Teli Pillo to cut his throat if the tanker crew surprise us."

As Faber was passing out of the room, Maté Cocido called after him: "We meet some day soon, eh, señor peeg?"

Faber did not answer.

Maté Cocido sauntered over to the door, then paused. "*Compañeros,* would you lak to come and have feast with us? We will barbecue wan cow, have plenty music, maybe a leetle drink, who know? *Si?*"

I shook my head. "No, thanks."

" 'E bloody well 'as 'is nerve!" grumbled Higgins, as the gaucho went out. "Oose cows does 'e think e's got?"

Aunt Sarah sniffed. "You have no imagination, Higgins. The man has raised thievery to an art."

Higgins looked grieved. " 'E laughs like a bleedin' jackass," he protested. "The blighter's loony, I s'y."

"Laughter," said Aunt Sarah, "is considered a mark of intellectual development among the gauchos. It raises them above the primitives and the animals who do not laugh. Sometimes I wish we English had cultivated it a little more. Blessed if it doesn't make me feel good right to the pit of my old stomach to hear that handsome scalawag let go a belly laugh." She chuckled, adding: "Now isn't that a hell of an imitation?"

She pushed herself erect with the aid of her cane and walked stiffly to the door. "I'm afraid I'm getting old, Jeffrey," she smiled. "Good-night, my boy."

I said good-night. Higgins remarked that he would go down and check up on our prisoners. I offered to go with him, but Shirley asked me to wait. Higgins went out alone.

She sat staring into the fire for a few minutes. I lighted a cigarette and leaned against the table, watching her. She looked incredibly small and wistful. Then she looked up, and smiled.

"Jeff," she said slowly, "I've been a horrid little beast. I know Dad would be ashamed of me, if he knew. But the thought of him below decks in a naval battle—well, it just paralyzes my reason, I guess."

"I know," I said. I was remembering the way Benito had died, and how it had affected me at the moment. "Sometimes we let our concern for one person blind us to the bigger fight." That sounded pedantic as the devil, but I didn't know what else to say.

"I'm glad you've changed your mind," I added. "We're really in a hell of a fix."

"What are we going to do, Jeff?"

"Right now I'm going down to the lagoon," I told her. "Perhaps there's enough left of that machine-gun to patch up."

She jumped to her feet. "I'll go with you."

THERE was no moon, but the stars shone with a brilliance I had never witnessed in a northern sky. There was a good breeze coming down from the mountains behind us.

"This is going to bring fog," Shirley told me. "Thank heaven the Germans

are not familiar with the channel. We won't have to worry about an attack tonight."

"That's something," I said. "But there's always tomorrow."

"Do you always worry about the tomorrows, Jeffrey?"

I looked down at her. "Why do you ask that?"

"No reason. Just something to say, I guess. I have never dared look ahead. It was so awfully blank." She changed the subject abruptly. "I'm glad they didn't wreck my sloop."

The sailboat was bobbing to her anchor cable. It was a small, rugged little boat, along the lines of a Gloucesterman. A fine sea-boat.

"Higgins built it for me," Shirley explained. "He's an excellent seaman. Funny, he's so different with a keel under him. On land he somehow seems out of his element, the old dear."

I found the remains of the machine-gun, but Pepe's bomb had rendered it worthless. We turned then, and started up the hill towards the place where the trench had been. It was no longer visible. Someone had filled it, and in the little mound which marked the spot was thrust a crude crucifix. There was a rosary hanging from the cross. That was all.

Shirley whispered, "Poor little Benito!" and turned away. As we walked up the slope, she slipped her arm through mine.

"Jeffrey," she pleaded softly, "isn't there something we can do besides send the English fleet after the *Admiral Schneider?*"

"I don't know what it would be," I said. "That pocket battleship is nothing to fool with."

She stiffened a little. "My father is aboard her," she reminded me. "There are also over two hundred other prisoners. You know what would happen if she were sunk."

"But, Shirley, I thought you said—"

She interrupted me. "I know I should take the larger viewpoint, but I can't. I just can't, Jeffrey. That's all there is to it. If you do anything that will cause my father's death—I'll hate you for it."

"What about all the other lives that will be lost if that raider gets away? Isn't it better to sacrifice. . . .?"

She shook her head doggedly. "You make it sound logical, Jeffrey. But my father is all I have. I can't help being illogical."

I didn't argue with her. We tramped up the hill in silence. As we rounded the corner of the house, we heard the strumming of a guitar, and a moment later a man's rich baritone. We paused to listen.

"Let's go over!" Shirley whispered.

We moved towards the music.

The gulfers were bivouacked in the lee of the sheds. They sprawled lazily on their ponchos, using their saddles as pillows, in a close circle around the blazing fire. Their horses, hobbled with bolas, formed a silent ring in the background.

Maté Cocido was sitting on a sheepskin, his back against a corner post of the corral. He was playing soft chords on a big guitar and singing in Spanish. The men joined him in the choruses. But as we approached, he saw us and stopped abruptly. The men all laughed and he looked a trifle guilty. I could imagine the sort of song he was singing.

"*Hola!*" he called to us. "Come seet down!" He bawled something at his men. Two of them moved away from the fire to make room for us.

I didn't want to stop, but Shirley gently pulled me down. I sat on a hard saddle. One man thrust a huge piece of hot meat spitted on a stick into my hand. Another offered me a bottle. The meat dripped fat. It smelled excellent. I tasted the wine. It was good.

The men were watching me. They were a hard lot, but their eyes were friendly. Maté Cocido strummed idly on his guitar. No one spoke. The wine warmed me inside, the fire out. The wood was hard and dry and it crackled cheerfully. I could smell the horse-sweat, and the peculiar human odor of men who live almost entirely on meat. Then Maté Cocido picked a few chords and began to sing in English—

"I sit me here to sing my song
To the beat of my old guitar;
For the man whose life is a bitter cup,

With a song may yet his heart lift up,
As the lonely bird on the leafless tree,
That sings 'neath the gloaming star."

I looked across the fire and found his eyes on my face. He had a splendid baritone, mellow and haunting. He seemed to be half singing, half talking. He paused a moment as though hunting around in his mind for words, then—

"There's never a man, my friend,
But must endure his fate;
And I think the times when all goes wrong,
Are the times for a man to show he's strong,
Until Death cracks him over the head,
As it's bound to sooner or late."

Shirley leaned against me and whispered in my ear: "That's from *The Gaucho, Martin Fierro.* It's the great epic poem of the Argentine. Listen!"

"Though I've lost about everything else I had,
I haven't lost my pride.
To be a saint I don't profess,
But I'll help a stranger in a mess;
Though I look like a loaf that's been over-fired,
I'm a cake with a soft inside."

He laughed loudly, slammed his fingers across the strings and asked: *"Què va.* How you lak that?"

"I like that," I told him. I wasn't thinking about the music, either.

"Now I seeng for my men," Maté Cocido said, and broke into Spanish. He didn't look at me this time. He leaned his head against the post and stared off towards the distant hills. I could not understand the words, but I knew he was singing of home. The men relaxed. Some folded their hands behind their heads and stared dreamily at the stars; others turned their faces against their sheepskins.

I touched Shirley's arm. "Let's go," I suggested.

NOBODY seemed to notice us take our leave. As we turned our backs to the fire, our shadows stretched out on the ground before us. For a while neither of us spoke. Then Shirley said: "He's a strange man, isn't he, Jeffrey?"

"Yes," I said. "He was trying to tell me something, I guess."

She nodded. "He was singing to those men of home. I watched their faces. It was pathetic. They're criminals, I know. People in this country call them the *'wolves with two skins.'* Yet when you think of it, somewhere, someplace, they once had homes. Perhaps it was on the pampas, perhaps in the slums of Valpo or B. A. Now they live like wild animals, but they like to think about home. It's a wonderful word, Jeffrey!"

"I guessed that was what he was singing of, Shirley. Funny, I've only been here a little over one day, yet this place seems like home to me. Does that make sense?"

She squeezed my arm. "There is something cosmic in the feeling of the human heart, Jeff, that turns to what we call home. It is people, rather than places, that make it so. It's sort of, well—sort of where you belong. That's why Uncle Mike named this lovely spot La Querancia."

We went into the big house. I was reluctant to say good-night. I could still hear the gulfers singing in the distance. It was one of those moments you hate to let slip away. Shirley turned at the bottom of the staircase and gave me a grave little smile.

"Good-night, Jeff. I'm awfully glad you came."

"So am I," I said.

She ran upstairs and I went into the big front room. There was still a glow from the embers in the fireplace. I walked to the window and looked down on the lagoon. I could still see the stars, but the fog was rolling slowly over the hill.

Fog and wind. I had often seen such phenomena around Montauk and Block Island up in the States. Well, I thought, at least it will keep those damn Nazis away for a few hours.

But then—*what?* We were living on borrowed time. I suddenly remembered what Cromwell had said about preventing the tanker from contacting the *Admiral Schneider.* A crazy scheme began taking shape in my head. I heard the

door open quietly behind me as Higgins came in.

"H'excuse me," he apologized. "H' I was just takin' a peep at the fire."

"Come in, come in," I said. "Look, Higgins—you know these channels pretty well?"

"H'every bloody h'inch of 'em, Mister Jeffrey. Before Cap'n Lundstrom showed up, I used to make the run by boat to Magalhães."

"Let's go up to Cromwell's room," I suggested.

We found the lieutenant dozing fretfully. He woke at once and turned up his lamp.

a fog. They certainly won't expect us, and they're short-handed."

Higgins spoke up. "From w'at you gents told me, h'I'd s'y they was 'eadin' for *Fury Inlet*. H'it's an 'idden spot, but orful deep. She'll 'ave out plenty of scope. Now if we was to break out her chain shackle. . . ."

"You would have to get aboard her to do that," Cromwell pointed out.

Higgins grinned. "There's a fog rollin' h'in."

We hashed it over a little longer. Cromwell insisted the scheme was merely a form of suicide, and at first he could only think of objections. But after a

"Now I seeng for my men," Maté Cocido said, and broke into Spanish.

"I've got an idea," I told him. "See what you think of it. Higgins here knows every inch of the channels. There's a fast, able sloop down in the lagoon, a good wind and fog coming in. If we could locate the tanker and turn her adrift, maybe the swift currents in this region would set her on the rocks."

Cromwell's eyes brightened. "How in the devil can you set a tanker adrift, man?"

"That's what I want to thrash over. You're the sailor. There's going to be

while he began to make suggestions. Finally he swung his legs over the edge of the bed.

"Damn it! Let's get started!" he cried.

It was my turn to object. I told him flatly he could not go. He was in no condition to travel, and he would only be an impediment. But Cromwell's British bullheadedness asserted itself. Higgins swung the balance.

"May'aps 'e could mind the 'elm, Mister Jeffrey," he put in.

I gave up.

CHAPTER XI

THE ANCHOR WATCH

WE WOUND slowly down the path from the house in single file. From somewhere over the hills, I could hear the dull crash of surf. The gulfers were silent and there was a total stillness about the night that made me loath to break it. I could see the Southern Cross, bright in the blue bowl that was the sky, thrust in the pale sash of the Milky Way. The snow on the hills looked close, and a soft blue-white.

of time. I looked at my watch. It was already well past midnight.

Higgins left us and went out to the sloop in a dinghy. We watched him scull it across the water, heard the gunwales touch, and then a halyard whined through the block as he raised the sail. He tied the dinghy to the mooring can. A moment later the little sloop was reaching for the wharf.

Neither Cromwell nor I heard the man approach. But when the floating dock shuddered slightly, I jerked around. I swung my shotgun.

It was Maté Cocido. "Do not shoot, señor!" he called softly, and crossed to

Cromwell limped heavily, but he would not be helped. His left leg dragged, with a strange scuffing noise. I could hear Higgins' revolver slapping his leg as he walked. I brought up the rear, carrying a short-barreled twelve-gauge shotgun.

I wondered if the other two were as excited as I. They showed no evidence of it. Higgins assured us that he had disconnected the dynamite with which we had mined the wharf and advised us to wait there while he brought the sloop over from her mooring. I knew he was thinking of Cromwell's bad leg, so I agreed, although it seemed a waste

where we were standing. "*Salud, mi buen compañero!*"

I was sore. "What in hell do you want?"

He bowed and made an ingratiating gesture with his hands. "I was watching the house," he said with a smile. "I see you come. I say to myself, 'Thees men go to 'ave some fun. I go.' *Si*, señor?"

"No you don't," I told him.

"Eef you look for thee German ship, I know where she ees at."

Higgins brought the sloop smartly alongside and leaped onto the float. He heard the gaucho's remark.

"The ruddy German's h'in Fury h'Inlet, I s'y."

Maté Cocido shook his head. "*Non, non.* 'E's not so far. Las' time thee German come, she lie in Whale Trap Cove, you call heem. There iss wan trail above cove. I see heem come wans' before."

Higgins looked crestfallen. "'E might be right at that," he admitted.

Maté Cocido dropped into the cockpit of the sloop. "I go weet you," he said cheerfully. "I am wan good sailor, *si, si.*"

Cromwell looked at me. He must have guessed what I was thinking.

"It might be good to have the blighter where we can keep half an eye on him," he commented.

There was logic in that. I shrugged and looked back at the house. There was a light on the second floor where Pillo was watching Faber. I began to doubt the wisdom of leaving the women without some word. But I was afraid of an argument. With any luck at all, we should be back before daylight. If we failed—then it didn't matter much if we never came back.

Maté Cocido touched my arm. "Do not worry, señor," he said. "My men they do not sleep."

I stepped into the boat. As Higgins cast off, the sails filled. The sloop dipped her rail and we slipped silently down the lagoon.

The little vessel had two berths below. We forced Cromwell to lie down, much against his will. Higgins urged me to do likewise, but I wouldn't consider it. I had never been more wide awake in my life.

Maté Cocido crawled forward and stretched full length on the tiny deck. Higgins crouched in the cockpit with the tiller hooked under his right arm, the sheets close to his left hand. As the sloop had a one-man rig there was nothing for me to do.

We tacked across the fiord, and when we came about, we felt the full force of the wind as it funneled through the entrance. The sloop heeled sharply. I heard a crash below, and then good English oaths, and I knew that Cromwell had been hurled out of his bunk. The lee rail vanished under a smother of spray as we shot between tall cliffs. I looked back. La Querancia stood out sharply in the cold, clean night. I saw the sheds, the white fences and the snow-rimmed mountains behind. I saw the light in Faber's room. And then I could see it no more.

The fog was waiting for us. It closed down, dank and clammy, and very cold. Higgins took a quick bearing from the cliffs. He leaned over and judged the current and then as the hills were swallowed in the mists, he turned up the tiny light in the binnacle. The compass was all we had to go by now, the compass and Higgins' instinct. We were ghosting through an opaque fog.

Maté Cocido crawled back, disappeared below and came out with oilskins. We put them on. After that we sat in a glum silence, broken now and again by Higgins' quiet, "Stand-by to come about!" and the swish of the boom swapping sides.

AN HOUR slipped by, then another. It was miserably cold. I had absolutely no sense of direction. Higgins seemed to know where he was by the wind on his face, and by the action of the currents. After a little while Cromwell hobbled up and crouched with us in the cockpit, his back hunched against the wind. They made just three shadows in the misty darkness.

Despite my anxiety for the estancia and my dread of the job ahead, I couldn't help musing over the peculiar whim of Destiny that had brought us together in the crowded cockpit of this tiny sloop, cutting through fog in the uncharted wilderness of Tierra del Fuego. Cromwell, obviously an English gentleman and an officer in the Royal Navy; Maté Cocido—scar-head—a renegade fugitive from prison, a gaucho born to the pampas of the Argentine; old Higgins, cockney bosun of windships. And myself.

Higgins eased the mainsheet suddenly and whispered: "We're almost 'ere. Don't nobody myke no noise. Will one o' you gents step up into the eyes an' keep a smart look-out?"

I started to get up, but Cromwell stopped me. "Let me," he said. "I'm

used to this job." He hauled himself out of the cockpit and wriggled along the deck.

Once I saw a great black bulk loom out of the mists. I thought it was the tanker, but it turned out to be a wall of rock. I moved back to give Higgins room to swing the long tiller, for the wind was gusty and uncertain. The air in spots was icy cold. Higgins explained that we were practically under a towering glacier. At his suggestion, I stood up and eased the boom over to deaden sound when we came about. It was incredible to me that a boat could move so silently.

Suddenly we heard a warning hiss from Cromwell. Higgins spilled a little wind and waited. I could feel the sloop lose way. A moment later Cromwell slithered back along the deck and crept into the cockpit.

"She's lying somewhere off the port quarter!" he whispered excitedly. "I didn't see her, but I heard noises."

Higgins grunted his pleasure. "You was bloomin' well correct," he told Maté Cocido. "She's lyin' about w'ere you said."

The gaucho chuckled. "W'at we do now, señor?"

Higgins said: "Suppose we come about an' ease up on 'er lee. Then if the bloody swine spot us, we can run with the wind and show 'em a clean pair of 'eels."

"That sounds like common sense," Cromwell agreed. "But then what?" He looked at me.

I could hear the restless noises a ship makes at anchor. A cabin door slammed. A moment later a generator started to throb somewhere below.

"Will she have more than one anchor out?" I asked.

"H'I doubts it," offered Higgins. "There's a strong tide 'ere an' most likely she'll have one 'ook down an' room to swing. She'll be keepin' an anchor watch, no doubt."

"That's what's worrying me," I grumbled. "If the seaman sees us, we're through."

Cromwell sniffed. "The man on anchor watch a night like this will most likely be curled up behind the winches, trying to keep warm. Of course, before we can do anything. . . ." He paused significantly.

Maté Cocido laughed softly. "Eet iss a task to my liking," he said. "I weel slip over the side and *zaz!* He weel not care w'at 'appens. *Non?*"

I couldn't help a shudder, but this wasn't the time to be squeamish. "We'll go over together," I told him. Somehow I still did not quite trust the man.

Higgins brought the sloop into the wind to test the pull of the current, then satisfied, he came quietly about and stood down wind until we could get into her lee and work back up. This would keep our noise from carrying to the tanker. It would also give us wind for a getaway.

We could hear her quite plainly now. Cromwell went forward again and conned us towards the bow of the tanker. The mist was a solid wall. No spot seemed different from the rest. Yet abruptly Higgins hissed: "There she is! Dead ahead, sir!"

For several seconds I could distinguish nothing. Then a shapeless blob appeared. It began to take form until finally the curved stem of the tanker loomed directly above me. I saw the long arc of the anchor chain, and the tide swirling around where it entered the water.

Cromwell eased down the mainsail as we ghosted into the rough triangle formed by the chain and the tanker's bow. Maté Cocido slipped a line through one of the great links of the chain, and the sloop swung gently to face the current.

We had arrived!

THE stillness was profound. There was a fair tide, and we could even hear it ripple across the ship's stem. I looked up the long, proud flare of the bow. Fortunately, there were no anchor lamps burning. Higgins gestured us to come close and we put our heads together for a quick council of war.

At first I wanted to go up alone, but they soon pointed out the futility of that move. Someone familiar with ships and anchors would have to crawl down

into the chain locker and, if possible, slip the pin from the chain shackle. After that, the brake on the anchor winch would have to be released. That would make a terrific noise. One of us would have to stay aboard until the chain passed out through the hawse-pipes, otherwise a seaman might reach the brake before the last of the chain had gone overboard.

This was no place to argue, with a German lookout somewhere in the darkness directly over our heads. It was obvious that Lieutenant Cromwell would have to stay in the boat. It was also obvious that the little sloop would have to stand clear of the ship's bow when the anchor chain came rattling through the hawse-pipes.

We sat in the darkness and took off our shoes and jackets. Higgins pushed a hunting knife and a small flashlight into my hands. Around his own neck he slung a canvas bag of tools. We all knew without putting it into words that Henry Higgins would have to be the man to go below.

Maté Cocido went up first. He clamped a knife between his teeth, hit me a slap on the shoulder and grabbed the chain above his head. He went up hand over hand, his long black-clothed body swinging rhythmically.

I jumped for the chain, caught it and started up. After a few feet, I was forced to wrap my legs around the chain, and shinny up it like a tree. I heard a faint *clank*, as the tools in Higgins' bag jangled, and I knew that he was right behind me.

The chain was greasy and when I finally reached the hawse-pipes, I had difficulty working around to the topside of it. I was no sailor. Even old Higgins was crowding behind me, waiting for me to get aboard.

Suddenly a rope dropped from above struck me on the head. I heard Maté Cocido whisper: "Grab eet, señor!"

I caught the line and a moment later I was over the guard rail onto the fo'c'sle head.

"Where's the sailor on watch?"

Even in the darkness I could see the gleam of Maté Cocido's teeth. "He weel not dee-sturb us," he whispered softly into my ear. "Of that I am convince'."

I didn't ask any more questions. We pulled Higgins over the rail. He was puffing so hard it took him several minutes to catch his breath.

"That's a ruddy long climb fer an' old cock of sixty," he panted. "W'ere's the watch?"

"Don't ask," I said, nodding at the gaucho.

"I 'opes it was the bloke 'oo shot Benito. Well, I'll get below."

I said I'd go with him, but Higgins shook his head. "You an' that 'eathen bandit keep a smart lookout," he advised. "There ain't but room fer one below." He led me over to the winch and showed me how to slip the brake. "If the damn 'Einies come before I get out," he told me, "jerk off the brake an' run fer h'it. Don't wyte fer me."

"We'll go together or stay together, Higgins."

He scowled and wagged his head. "Very pretty. But h'it don't myke sense. There's the estancia an' the women-folk."

He padded across the deck and disappeared down a ladder. We heard a metal door creak softly open, then silence.

THERE was a long interval of waiting. As my eyes became accustomed to the murkiness, I could just make out the shape of the bridge. That was all. Maté Cocido walked over and stood in the shadow behind a ventilator where he could watch the two approaches to the forepeak without risk of being surprised. Strangely enough, he seemed to know his way around ships better than I did.

I went over to the rail and looked down. Cromwell had sculled or pulled the sloop around to the starboard side of the tanker, away from the possible lash of the port anchor chain. As I moved back, the sound of metal pounding leaped at me from a ventilator. I put my ear to the opening. Higgins' cockney oaths rose along with the foul stench of the bilge.

A bell on the bridge tolled seven times. Three thirty. Daylight wasn't far away. I looked at my wrist-watch. Higgins had been gone nearly fifteen minutes.

Suddenly someone on the bridge shouted in German. The noise after the dead silence was nerve-wracking. At first I thought we were discovered. Then the call was repeated. I could not understand the words, but the tone was querulous. I edged over to where Maté Cocido formed a shadow among shadows.

"I wander w'at he say?" observed the gaucho indifferently.

"He's probably calling the anchor watch," I told him. "When he doesn't get an answer he'll send someone else up here. That will be just too bad."

"For heem, *si*."

I ran over to the ventilator and called softly to Higgins. "How are you coming?"

"There's one 'ell of a lot of cable 'ere," complained Higgins. "H'it'll tyke me h'another ten minutes, h'at least."

"For God's sake, hurry it!" I told him. "They're already yelping on the bridge."

I went back to the ladder. My nerves were on edge. Maté Cocido was loafing casually against the tall vent, humming softly to himself. I walked over to the rail again. I found a length of small line and dropped it down into the sloop, calling for Cromwell to tie on my shotgun.

I felt better with the shotgun in my hands. Five minutes passed. Six minutes. Seven. I went back to the fore vent and called to Higgins.

"The bloody shackle's rusted!" he complained.

When I got back to the ladder, Maté Cocido laid a warning hand on my arm.

"Some wan he come!" he whispered.

"This one belongs to me," I said. "You take the other ladder."

The gaucho hesitated, then I heard him chuckle as he glided silently across the deck.

The footsteps came straight down the main deck. There was a wooden box set over a winch-motor near the head of the ladder. I dropped behind that. Finally I saw the seaman evolve out of the mist. He had on a stocking cap pulled over his ears, a canvas jacket with the dark neck of a sweater rolled over the top. A revolver swung at his waist. He was talking to himself. It sounded like cursing.

He reached the foot of the ladder and started up. Just before his head reached the level of the fo'c'sle head, someone shouted from the bridge. The seaman paused, turned on the ladder and yelled back. I set myself and gripped the gun.

The seaman started up again. He growled *"Verflucht!"* under his breath, stepped onto the deck beside me and called: "Hermann!"

I stood up and drove the butt of the shotgun against his head. He took a half-step, dropped to his knees, balanced there a moment before toppling gently on his side.

I stood over him, watching to see if he would move. Maté Cocido padded over. He wanted to finish the seaman then and there, but I stopped him.

The officer on the bridge bellowed again. When he got no answer, he blew a whistle. Our time was definitely limited! The whistle shrilled again.

I ran over to the ventilator and called down to Higgins.

"Just a second more," he pleaded. "H'I've almost got h'it!"

"To hell with it! Come on up!"

"One second!" called Higgins and I heard him pounding.

The whistle shrilled from the bridge. A moment later, another whistle sounded aft. I knew they were calling up the watch below. In a few minutes the whole ship would be awake. Cromwell called softly and I went over to the rail.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Higgins had some trouble. The bridge sent forward one man. Now the whole damn ship's alive! I wish to God Higgins would come up!"

"You'd better hurry!" Cromwell said.

Maté Cocido appeared at my elbow. "Many men they come," he whispered.

I swore and ran to the vent. "Higgins! Higgins!" I called. I could hear him banging desperately. He did not answer.

I KNEW he wouldn't come up till his job was done. And I knew, too, that I could not leave him. I reached the ladder as a half-dozen seamen tramped into sight on the deck below. I let them get within ten paces of the ladder, then I turned my flashlight on them, letting it shine along the barrel of the shotgun.

"Don't come any closer!" I called.

They stood dead still, taken completely by surprise. They blinked into the light, like startled cattle. Most of them had been roused out of a sound sleep. The officer in the lead recovered first. He barked something at the men and started for the ladder.

"Stop!" I warned him.

I guess Maté Cocido thought I let the officer come too close. He fired from the darkness to my left. The officer's leg flew out at an angle as though it had been pulled. He fell on his face and lay there screaming.

The five seamen just stared. Then they began to back away. But the shot had done its damage. A rifle cracked from the bridge, and simultaneously a slug *spanged* off the winch beside me. I doused the flashlight and jumped behind a vent. As the light went out, the seamen scattered.

For a moment my eyes were useless. Then I saw a shape evolve over the top of the ladder. I jerked my gun. Then Higgins spoke.

"H'it's 'Enry 'Iggins!" he called breathlessly, and piled over.

"Let's go!" I said. "The whole ship knows we're here."

Higgins hung onto my arm. "We cawn't! The bloody shackle's loose. You an' the 'eathen go. H'I'll 'old 'em off h'until the chain pays out!"

"Damn it, Higgins! You'll do what you're told! Nobody knows how to get to La Querancia but you. Now get the hell down in that sloop and wait. Maté Cocido and I will hold 'em off until the chain runs out."

The rifleman on the bridge was taking pot shots in our direction. But it was dark, and he was just wasting ammunition. Abruptly the searchlight flared on. The fo'c'sle head became as bright as day. We dove in the lee of a winch. Three slugs chipped the deck where we had been standing.

"It's time to go," I said, grinning in spite of myself. "They're getting unfriendly as hell."

I heard Maté Cocido's revolver fire. On the third slow shot, the searchlight went out.

"Beat it!" I told Higgins. "Stand the sloop off to starboard, clear of the chain. As soon as you shove off, I'll release the brake. When she pays out, I'll join you."

"W'at about the bandit?"

"He goes with you now," I said.

Maté Cocido was not amenable to orders. He flatly refused to "mees thee fon" as he called it. So Higgins threw a line over the rail and slid down alone.

I waited until I saw the sloop glide away from the tanker's stem, then I ran over to the winch and pulled off the brake. Immediately the chain began to pay out. It ran faster and faster, throwing first mud, then as it reached the little-used section, red dust showered the deck. The noise was terrifying. The whole forepeak shuddered.

I went back to the ladder and threw myself flat. A group of sailors started a run down the deck. It was a half-hearted gesture. When I sent a blast of buckshot ricochetting down the deck plates, they scrambled back to safety.

The noise stopped abruptly. There was a tremendous slap as the end of the chain slashed against the ship's topside, then complete silence. The big tanker hesitated. Then like a horse that has broken its tether, she pulled back and started to swing her head. I had a momentary sensation of giddiness. We had succeeded!

"O. K., Maté!" I called. "Let's go!"

He slithered across the deck on his stomach. We crawled to the rail. Someone turned loose a machine-gun from the bridge. It was like a hail storm of lead. Any minute the searchlight might come on again. Then we never would make it.

The sloop came swerving out of the mist, running free. There was no time now for lines.

"This is it!" I told Maté Cocido. "Can you swim?"

He answered by diving over the side. I paused only long enough to send the other barrel scorching down the deck plates, then I threw the empty shotgun overside and followed.

The water was cold beyond belief. It knocked not only the breath from me, but my senses. I think I screamed as I broke water. Then someone grabbed me and I was hauled roughly aboard.

The machine-gun chattered behind us,

but the sloop had her rail well under.

Higgins chuckled. "You'd better go below an' get h'out of them wet things," he advised. "There's plenty of good rum in the locker."

I took his advice.

CHAPTER XII

MANHUNT

WE MADE a good run, yet it was nearly seven o'clock before we finally slid between the portals that guarded La Querancia. Meanwhile, I had stolen a couple of hours sleep. Higgins and Cromwell had spelled each other at the tiller, with Higgins catnapping in the cockpit. Maté Cocido wore his perpetual smile. He seemed tireless.

We were sighted as we passed into the fiord and by the time Higgins brought the sloop alongside the wharf, Shirley and Tonita were impatiently waiting for us. As I sprang to the landing, Shirley ran over.

"Oh, Jeff!" she cried. "Faber got away!"

"Away?" roared Higgins. "W'at 'appened to Pillo?"

Tonita let go a ghastly wail and buried her swollen face in her skirt. I looked at Shirley. She bit her lip, nodded.

"The dirty swine!" cursed Henry Higgins. "Poor Pillo."

"Faber can't get very far," I said. "I should have shot him! Higgins, let Shirley moor the boat. Saddle a horse for me and come up to the house."

Maté Cocido came over. "My crazy gauchos know every bit of thees ground," he said. "I poot them out. *Si, señor?*"

"O. K.! Just so we get him. I don't much care how."

Everybody scattered. I went up the slope to the big house. The fog had started to lift, but now it seemed to hesitate as if it were coming down again. It gave me a depressed feeling, for I realized that it was going to be next to impossible to hunt down Faber in this kind of weather.

Sarah Montagu was awaiting me in the library.

"I see by your face that you have heard the news," she said. "I'm sorry, Jeffrey."

"Perhaps we can catch him. How did it happen?"

She opened her tiny hands expressively. "Who can tell? Perhaps poor Pillo fell asleep. That Nazi was a sly fox. He must have had a knife hidden in his boots. What luck did you have, my boy?"

I summarized what we had done. She nodded her proud white head in approval.

"Splendid! If the tanker went on the rocks, it will delay the refueling of the warship."

"Only a few days at the most," I grumbled. "It's a good thing we took the rotor-arm out of the plane's distributor. Faber would have been long gone by this time."

She rapped her cane impatiently. "We must get word to the mainland somehow."

Higgins galloped up to the house and called me. I paused long enough to choose a Colt forty-five and a pair of field-glasses. Higgins was riding a sorrel mare and holding a big bay gelding for me. The brute was full of spirit and I no sooner hit the saddle than he wheeled on his hind legs. The gates were already open, so I gave him his head and we raced through the yard for the hills.

He had an easy gait and a strong heart. I heard the sorrel panting windily behind, so I eased up until Higgins drew alongside.

"There's no sense in 'eading for the regular passes," he reasoned. "My men'll cover 'em."

I reined in. Isn't there some point from which we can look down on the whole valley, Higgins? Maybe I could pick up something with the glasses?"

Higgins bobbed his head. He looked ludicrous in his flapping bombachas with the little white tufts of hair clinging to his temples under the stiff brim of his gaucho hat.

"There's a plyce Capn' Mike used to call the crow's-nest," he said. "Follow me."

We cantered a few hundred yards, then the trail steepened sharply and we had to walk the horses. The sorrel was

good at this kind of going. She was a short-coupled little animal, and she liked to lead. She put her head down and plodded steadily upwards, her broad rump swaying from side to side. She had my gelding blowing through his nostrils before we came out of the spiral trail onto the broad upper plateau.

This was the table-land I had seen from the plane. It seemed to stretch interminably towards the distant horizon. Far away I could see sheep herds drifting through the skimpy, windswept brush. The place was bare and the wind biting. We cantered across a corner of the plateau and circled around a small hill. On the north side of the slope there were spotted patches of snow. It was a hard snow, like coarse-grained salt.

WE ROUNDED the hill and walked our horses out onto a small ledge. There was a sheer drop of a thousand feet to the floor of the valley. Higgins waved his arm in an all-inclusive gesture.

"There she is, Mister Jeffrey! There's your La Querancia!"

He dismounted and I followed suit.

The rock at our backs protected us from the raw east wind. Northward as far as the eye could reach, stretched the valley, green between the hills. Cattle grazed on the floor and wandered up the slopes to the timber line. On the other side of the valley, above the first row of hills, was another plateau, and beyond that a succession of mountains, rising higher and higher until they merged with the mists.

From this vantage I could see right over the cliffs that formed the southern gateway to our fiord. There were small, broken islands, and yet beyond them, the open sea. Drake Strait! There was no land between here and Antarctica!

Higgins spoke so suddenly he startled me. "Cap'n Mike used to come up 'ere a lot," he said. " 'E planned the l'y-out from this spot. 'E wanted to be buried 'ere."

"He will be," I said.

The gelding was sweating and shivering. I patted him on the neck.

"If you don't mind me s'yin' so, Mister Jeffrey, you look h'exactly like the skipper used to look. 'E was a big guy, too, with a mop o' red fuzz on' is 'ead an' a pair of shoulders like a bullock. 'E used to talk a lot about you. 'Ad a pitcher of you 'e used to show me. ' 'Iggins,' 'e'd s'y. ' 'Iggins, we'll 'ave this little shyver down 'ere somed'y.' Meanin' you, Mister Jeffrey. I reckon Cap'n Mike never figgered you'd grow up on 'im."

If that damn sentimental Limey doesn't stop, Jeffrey Wynn, he'll have you blubbering like a school-girl.

"Where do you suppose Faber would head for?" I asked.

Higgins took off his hat and ran a colored handkerchief over his bald pate. "If 'e was a normal toff, 'e'd 'ead for the 'ills as fast as 'e could," he reasoned aloud. "But bein' as them Nazis ain't like other people, it's 'ard tellin', Mister Jeffrey. With 'is gall, 'e may be waitin' fer us in the parlor down at the 'ouse."

I took the glasses out of their case and focused them on the big house below. "He'd hardly try that," I said. "But I agree he's too cagey to do the obvious. It's a stupid fox that takes to the open with the hounds at his heels. Faber is not stupid."

I could see riders heading up the valley. There were little groups of twos and threes working across the hills on the other side. Once I thought I saw the dapple gray stallion of Maté Cocido. But I couldn't be certain. I swung the glasses towards the lagoon. The little sloop resembled a tiny toy from this distance. The blue Fairchild almost merged with the blue of the water.

I started to turn away, then stopped. Subconsciously I knew there was something wrong with the scene, but for a moment I could not figure out what was wrong.

The dinghy was tied to the Fairchild!

Someone had rowed out to the plane. Someone was in it now.

I handed the glasses to Higgins. "There's someone in the plane!" I told him. "What do you make of it?"

He wiped each lens, spread his legs and adjusted the glasses to his eyes. I saw him stiffen.

"Damn if there h'ain't! Now you don't suppose. . . .?" He took the glasses

away from his face and looked at me. "H'I took out the bloody rotor. The engine won't start."

I crowded the glasses back into their case. "There's only one guy on this island with any interest in that plane!" I said. "And he may have a spare part. Let's get the hell down there!"

I jumped into the saddle and the gelding pawed the air with his forefeet. Higgins bellowed a warning.

"Fer God's syke, tyke it h'easy!"

We galloped around the hills and across the corner of the plateau, but when we reached the narrow, twisting trail that spiraled down to the valley floor, we lost time. The little sorrel's blocky body stood her in good stead. Higgins held her head and she braced her hind legs, squatted, and half slid, half walked down the path. The bay was lathered with sweat and the dirt kicked up by the mare turned his coat to mud. I seemed to be sliding and falling through a continuous cloud of dust. There was no chance to help the horse. I gave him his head and braced myself in the stirrups.

It's your fault, you damn fool, I kept thinking. *You should have shot Faber. If you're too squeamish for that, you should have put more men to guard him. He was your ace in the hole. Fool! Fool!*

THE fog of dirt vanished at last and we were on the level. The gelding was shaking with nervousness. He wanted to run. I turned his head towards the lagoon and gave rein. He shoved his long neck out, lowered his belly and went to work. The little sorrel stood the pace for about fifty yards, then fell behind. There was a long, gradual slope to the waterfront. If the big bay tripped. . . . .

His hooves came down like pistons, hard, hitting the ground each time with a wallop that hurled him another pace. The incline was too steep. Every time he struck with his front legs, I could feel the jolt clear to the base of my skull. *If the gates are closed, son, your neck is done for! This crazy beast will never stop!*

The gates were open, thank God, The bay wanted to stop at the feed shed. I kicked him on. We wound down the road to the wharf. I thought he was going to run clear over it, but he sat on his haunches and slid for twenty feet. I was out of the saddle before he stopped.

Sarah Montagu

The plane rode quietly to her mooring. The dinghy was hauled up on the beach.

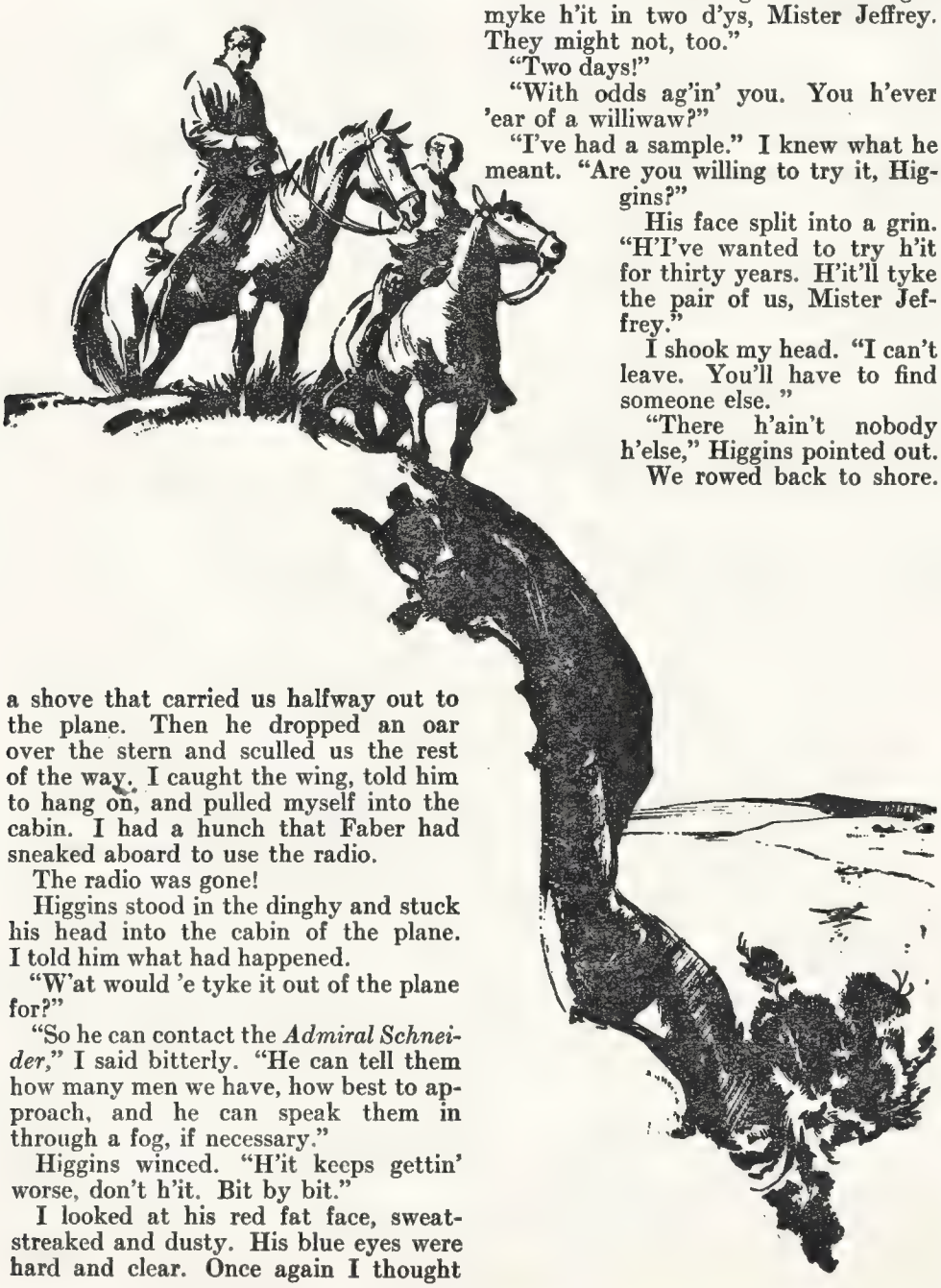
I ran down the sand towards it. Higgins thundered up and heaved himself out of the saddle. I was pushing the boat into the water when he reached me.

"The plane's still 'ere!" he panted.

"I'm going out."

Higgins waved me in, gave the dinghy

From the ledge where we'd walked our horses there was a sheer drop of a thousand feet to the floor of the valley.



a shove that carried us halfway out to the plane. Then he dropped an oar over the stern and sculled us the rest of the way. I caught the wing, told him to hang on, and pulled myself into the cabin. I had a hunch that Faber had sneaked aboard to use the radio.

The radio was gone!

Higgins stood in the dinghy and stuck his head into the cabin of the plane. I told him what had happened.

"W'at would 'e tyke it out of the plane for?"

"So he can contact the *Admiral Schneider,*" I said bitterly. "He can tell them how many men we have, how best to approach, and he can speak them in through a fog, if necessary."

Higgins winced. "H'it keeps gettin' worse, don't h'it. Bit by bit."

I looked at his red fat face, sweat-streaked and dusty. His blue eyes were hard and clear. Once again I thought how much he looked like a fat little friar.

"Higgins," I said slowly. "Would it be possible to sail the sloop to Punta Arenas?"

He ran his tongue around the inside of his cheek. "Two good men might myke h'it in two d'ys, Mister Jeffrey. They might not, too."

"Two days!"

"With odds ag'in' you. You h'ever 'ear of a williwaw?"

"I've had a sample." I knew what he meant. "Are you willing to try it, Higgins?"

His face split into a grin. "H'I've wanted to try h'it for thirty years. H'it'll tyke the pair of us, Mister Jeffrey."

I shook my head. "I can't leave. You'll have to find someone else."

"There h'ain't nobody h'else," Higgins pointed out.

We rowed back to shore.

I left Higgins to get some extra gear aboard the sloop and went up to the house. The smell of food reminded me that I had not eaten since the previous day. I found Shirley and Sarah Montagu in the dining-room. Tonita set a place for me and I sat down.

"Where are all the others?" I asked.

The old lady nodded towards the hills. "Out looking for the German. Did you find anything, Jeffrey?"

I hadn't meant to tell them about the radio. It seemed pointless to worry them further. But Sarah Montagu kept looking at me, and when Shirley said, "I saw you out at the plane just now," I told them the truth.

SARAH MONTAGU poured me a cup of black coffee. "Well," she said when I had finished talking, "the one thing I admired most about Mike Reynolds was his pig-headed refusal to know when he was whipped. Nels Lundstrom was the same way. I've seen those two lock horns and stay frozen that way for days on end, like a couple of rutting stags." She sighed. "They belonged to a different generation."

Shirley dropped a fork against her plate. "Aunt Sarah! Jeff hasn't said anything about quitting!"

The old lady didn't look up. "I guess he's just tired, poor boy."

"The hell I'm tired!" I growled. "Who's quitting! Higgins and I are leaving for Punta Arenas in the sloop!"

Shirley pushed back her chair. "Oh, Jeff! You would never make it! The sloop's only twenty-five feet."

"There's an even chance we can," I said. "We may run across another ship of some kind where I can send a radiogram. In any case, it's better than sitting here like an old woman—oh, I'm sorry, Aunt Sarah."

She sniffed. "There's nothing to be sorry about. Nobody knows better than I do how useless I am. You'll know some day how it feels, Jeffrey. If I was forty years younger, though, I'd go with you. Indeed I would. You'd not stop me either!" She glared at me, and for a moment I was afraid she would go even now.

"I'll bet you would," I said hastily. "Look—I've got an idea! If we can get to Punta Arenas, maybe we can get a Chilean patrol boat to come back with us. The *Admiral Schneider* wouldn't dare create an international incident by attacking a South American gunboat."

Aunt Sarah nodded her head approvingly. "A splendid idea!"

"You think I ought to go then? You don't feel I ought to stick here?"

The old lady gave her head an emphatic toss. "I certainly think you should try it, if you want to. There is no point in your staying here, Jeffrey. Maté Cocido and the rest of us can do about everything there is to be done here. If the German cruiser arrives before you get back—well, there would be nothing you could do about it, my boy."

I turned to Shirley. She was quite pale. "And you," I said. "What do you think, Shirley?"

She smiled wistfully. "I think you've got an awful lot of nerve, Jeff. You're exactly like your Uncle Mike!" She said it defiantly.

Sarah Montagu bent over her plate. I thought she was smiling.

Cromwell came into the dining-room. He looked worn and shaky. He wanted to know if we had found any trace of Faber. He was a little stunned when I told him that Faber had removed the radio from the plane.

"It was a good idea," he muttered thickly. "We should have thought of it first."

I repeated our plan to sail to Punta Arenas and invited him to come along.

"Three would be much better than two," I pointed out. "It's going to be a hard trip."

He put his elbows on the table and dropped his face into his hands. "I'd never make it," he said jerkily. "That jaunt last night nearly did me in." He lifted his face and looked at me. His eyes were moist and feverish. His face was drawn and haggard. "You understand, don't you, Wynn?"

I was a trifle surprised, but he did look hellish. "Sure I understand. I was just thinking you'd rather be in a boat if the Germans came—than here."

Shirley rose from the table. "I'll help

Tonita pack some food. You'll need it."

At first Cromwell objected to notifying the Chilean authorities of the presence of the pocket battleship. He was afraid they might either drive the warship away to another hiding-place, or intern her. But when I reminded him that our chief concern at the moment was in preserving our lives he shrugged and finished his meal in silence. I left him with Sarah Montagu and went out to find Maté Cocido.

THE big gaucho was lying flat on his back in the shade behind one of the sheds. His legs were crossed and his hands were folded at the back of his head so that the upturned palms made a pillow. His hat was sloped over his head and eyes. He might have been asleep, except that there was a rope-like cigar angling out of his mouth. His stomach rose and fell with his breathing and when it fell, smoke coiled out of his nostrils.

As I came up to him, the angle of the cigar changed. He grinned.

"*Salud, mi buen compañero.*" He sat erect, then pulled his legs under him and sat on his hams. "*Que va?* How goes it?"

I squatted beside him. I took a match out of my pocket and began to draw doodles in the dirt. I wasn't sure just what to say to the man. My feelings towards him were confused. He was a thief and a scoundrel. *Well, I suppose he is.* But he gave off an aura of competence. *You like the guy, that's it.*

I looked at the dark, purplish stubble of beard on his face. He grinned at me, his eyes laughing and insolent. I grinned back. I told him what Higgins and I planned to do.

"You want I should stay here, *comarada?*" he asked me.

"Yes," I said. "I wish you would."

"You will not worry? You are not afraid to trust me, señor?" His eyes were not smiling now. They were searching my face.

"No," I said honestly. "I have perfect confidence in you."

He started to grin, then his face sobered. He dropped his eyes this time.

For a while we just sat there, then, "There will be no harm come to thees place," he said slowly. "Nor to any wan on it. Not so long as there is wan gaucho alive. Believe me, señor."

"Thanks," I said, and stood up.

He got up too. He was grinning again. "Maybe I have that German peeg hang from the flagpole w'en you come home. You lak to see that?"

Higgins came around the corner of the shed. "'Oo's 'angin' 'oo w'ere?" he wanted to know.

"Maté Cocido is going to have Faber dangling from the flagpole when we get back," I said.

The cockney bobbed his round head. "A bloody beautiful sight to look forward to, h'I'd s'y. Let's get started w'ile the tide's fair."

I went back to the house to say goodbye to the women. Shirley wasn't around and the old lady was extremely casual. She wanted to save me making a fool of myself, I suppose.

"Well, what are you wasting time for?" she snapped when I came into the library. "I thought you'd be halfway to Magalhães by this time."

"I wanted to say good-bye."

She snorted. "You're coming back, aren't you? Then you had better get started." She had a bottle of rum hidden in the fold of her skirt. She handed it to me. "You may get a bit dampish," she said tartly. "Use it. But don't let that stupid Higgins get drunk on you. Now run along." Her eyes were getting very bright, so I turned and hurried down to the wharf.

Higgins had brought the sloop alongside. He looked embarrassed and a little guilty. I began to wonder if he'd found a bottle elsewhere. He had a couple of heavy sweaters, a pea-jacket, a stocking cap and oil-skins laid out in the cockpit for me.

"H'I figgered you might tyke the first trick," he suggested. "I'm a bit groggy, if you don't mind."

"Go below," I told him. "I can take her for a while."

The suggestion seemed to startle him. "H'it's too stuffy down below," he said. "We'd both better st'y up 'ere w'ere we may be needed in a 'urry."

I climbed into the sweaters while Hig-

gins gave some last-minute advice to Pepe and Tomas, who stood on the wharf. I took the tiller. Higgins made sail, and we started to move.

The tide was with us and the wind was on the quarter. The little sloop settled comfortably on her starboard beam. She took her head like the big bay gelding had done, and lit out for the channel. I turned for a quick, last look.

I wondered if I should ever see La Querancia again.

CHAPTER XIII

STRAITS RACE

I CLIMBED into oilskins soon after we boiled through the gate. The sloop was a sea-kindly little craft, but her twenty-five feet didn't carry much freeboard, and spume-spray swished over the gunwales. Higgins pulled his sou'wester around his ears, buttoned the strap across his chin, and settled down to the long drive. His pink face reddened and he blinked steadily as the salt spray stung his eyes. I noticed that the guilty look had worn off his face, to be replaced by a smug, cat-ate-the-canary expression.

We were driving her hard. The lee rail went under, and stayed under. I glanced at the sky. It was strangely lead-colored. Occasionally a lone cloud passed overhead, hurrying westward. Often, when we shot past the mouth of a fiord, a gust would strike the sails. Once a vagrant blast caught us unaware and the mainsail jibed, nearly carrying away the rigging.

"Maybe we'd better tyke in a mite o' sail," Higgins suggested. "H'it's rawther dusty."

I brought her up into the wind while he took a reef in her. That helped and we made better time. But I didn't trust the sky. It seemed to be waiting to get us into a good open stretch before cutting loose with a squall.

The channel became a gorge, with tremendous cliffs rising sheer on either side. They looked much more formidable than they had from the height of the plane. Fortunately, the tide ran with us. I wondered what would happen when the tide changed. All the lush green warmth of La Querancia had disappeared. The land was barren and unfriendly. A bitter reminder that this was truly the bottom of the world.

About noon I said to Higgins: "We ought to be passing Whale Trap Cove where the tanker's stranded—I hope."

He jumped. "H'excuse me, Mister Jeffrey. 'Ow's that?" He looked guilty, as though I had caught him off-guard.

"Higgins! What in hell's the matter with you?"

He swallowed and cast an anxious glance at the closed hatch of the cabin. But he said nothing.

"Take the tiller," I growled. He came over resignedly. I reached under my oilskins and put my hand on my revolver butt. Then I leaned over and pushed back the hatch.

Shirley stuck her head over the top and grinned at me. "Don't blame Higgins," she laughed. "I bullied him into it." She took a lungful of fresh air and climbed onto the deck. "It was beastly stuffy down there."

I was too angry to speak for a minute. "You should not have come," I said, trying to keep my temper. "You've spoiled everything."

"No, Jeff. No." She wasn't laughing now. "I had to be of some use."

"You should have stayed at the ranch where you belong," I repeated. "This is no trip for a woman."

"I can sail this boat much better than you can, Jeff." She wasn't angry, merely serious. "I can spell you at the tiller. Please, don't be sore. I'd go crazy sitting in the house, doing nothing."

Higgins put in lamely: "She's a good sailor, Mister Jeffrey."

I glared at him. "It's too risky. You know that damn well. We'll have to go back and dump her."

She stiffened at that. "Might I remind you, Jeffrey, that my father and I are your partners, not your employees. Might I remind you, too, that this is my boat which you so high-handedly appropriated without so much as asking for it." Her eyes sparked angrily. "If you don't like my presence aboard, you can get out and walk. There is a trail above

the cliffs leading back to the estancia."

"If I'd known there was an undisciplined brat at La Querancia," I growled at her, "I'd have stayed in America."

That got her. She clenched her fists. "Why didn't you!"

Higgins stood up suddenly. "Steady!" he warned us. "W'en we myke this turn in the channel, we 'as to pass the mouth of Whale Trap."

I forgot the girl. "Isn't there any way to avoid it?" I asked.

He wagged his head. "Nary a chawnce. But don't worry yer 'ead, Mister Jeffrey. The blighters'll 'ave all the bloody trouble they want with their own ruddy tub."

"I hope you're right," I said, and crawled up forward.

Higgins chose to run close to the mouth of Whale Trap Cove. We would be much closer to the Nazi tanker, but by the same token we would pass her more rapidly. The walls were sheer for a good eight hundred feet. How Higgins had managed to locate the cove in the fog, the night before, would always stand out for me as a classic example of instinctive seamanship.

The entrance to the fiord, or cove as Higgins called it, was not over fifty yards in width. As we slid closer, I could again feel the cold, chill air I had felt the previous evening. Then the glacier came into view.

It was a huge wall of frozen ice, poised precipitously above the narrows, for it formed one side of the entrance. Little wonder the *Dresden* had been able to lie in one of these fiords an entire summer, during the last war, while the English fleet prowled the seas outside in search of her.

Then I had a view of the cove.

THE tanker had drifted close to the far shore. She must have picked up a rock with her screw, for she was down by the stern with a noticeable list to starboard. The surface of the water was black with oil.

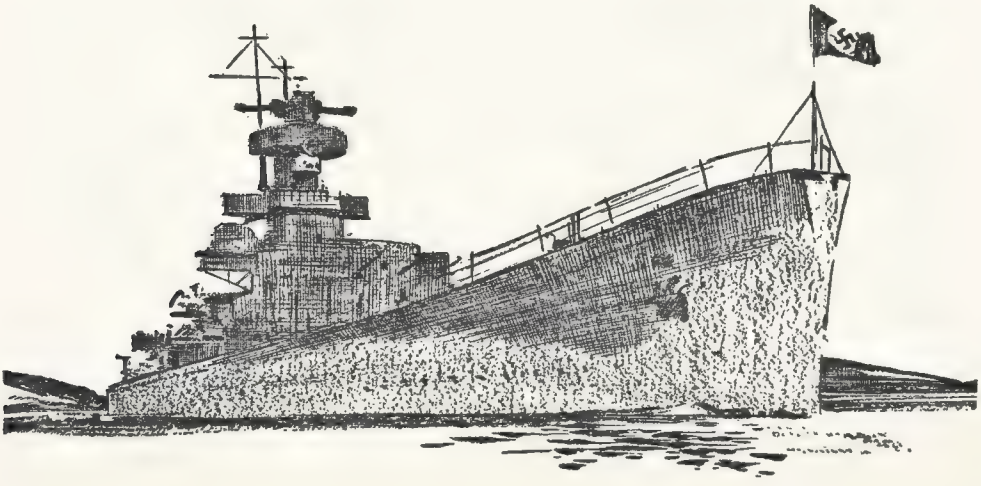
She lay half a mile back in the inlet, and I was almost sure we could ghost past the mouth without being seen. But just as I opened my mouth to congratulate Higgins, a gun roared and a shell dropped into the water so hard by our stern that spray came aboard.

"'Ang on!" Higgins shouted.

The sloop heeled sharply. We fairly boiled through the water. Another shell whistled by, but it was high. A minute later we were past the entrance and out of sight.

I crawled aft. "Well, that did it," I said. "They'll be after us in the small boats."

"The blighters must of 'ad a man h'at the guns," the cockney grumbled. "I saw



no gun last night. Sounded like a three-pounder."

"Probably on the flying bridge, where they'd have a wider arc," I said.

A few minutes later, Shirley grabbed my arm. "Jeff—look!"

I looked. A ship's lifeboat was coming out of the inlet. Higgins glanced over his shoulder and chuckled.

"If they wants to tyke arter us, we'll give 'em a ryce!"

I couldn't share his sporting attitude. "They have an engine in that boat," I reminded him.

"H'engines! *Swith!* Stink-pots, h'I calls 'em!" He gave a contemptuous belly-laugh. "Best they can do is a bloody five knots, m'ybe six. Shyke out that reef, if you will, Mister Jeffrey."

He brought her up into the wind. I took one quick glance at the lifeboat rapidly closing the distance between us, then jumped for the quivering boom. Shirley scrambled up to help. We freed the reef and as I hauled on the halyard, the Germans opened fire with another machine-gun. I heard the slugs *chunk* into the hull.

"'Old it!" bellowed Higgins. "'Ere we go!"

The sloop jerked a couple of times, got the wind, then with her starboard rail smothered, started to travel. I looked fearfully at the sturdy mast. It was bending. . . .

"We're loggin' a jolly good h'eight knots," said Higgins proudly.

A second volley from the lifeboat punctured a ventilator on the cabin. We crowded onto the floor of the cockpit.

"We're getting away," I said. "Maybe you'd better not press her too hard."

Shirley said: "You're not afraid, Jeff?"

"I got some sense," I growled at her. "If that mast goes overboard, we're finished!"

"She can tyke it," Higgins said. "She's an open-water craft, she h'is."

I suddenly had a warm flooding of confidence. The little sloop was rapidly outdistancing the lifeboat. If the wind held, we were safe.

"See—I helped a little with the sail, Jeff," Shirley said, smiling.

"Sure you did. I'm sorry, kid."

"I'm glad you don't mind now. I don't like to have you mad at me, Jeff."

"No. I'm not mad."

The lifeboat was still plodding after us with Germanic persistence, but already she was well over a couple of miles behind. There was a turn in the channel ahead, and then we would lose her.

Higgins grunted cheerfully. "I'm bloody 'ungry, h'I am."

Shirley laughed and scrambled down into the cabin and came up with a bag of sandwiches. They were man-sized sandwiches, each with a chunk of meat in them as large as an average steak.

We ran around the point and got the wind almost dead behind. The sloop was gaff-rigged. Higgins paid out the sheet until the sail took all the wind she could use. I wanted to take the tiller, but Higgins waved me away. The channel led past a couple of smaller inlets, then made another big swing southward. As we started around the bend, the wind crept around to our beam. We were really moving.

Then Higgins said: *"Oh, my God!"*

The channel funneled to a narrow pass between towering cliffs. Squarely in the middle of the narrows, steaming slowly, majestically towards us was the pocket battleship—the *Admiral Schneider!*

(To Be Concluded)

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

ONLY one new recruit to the Writers' Brigade this month—Frederick White, whose distinctly off-the-trail fish story, we hazard a prediction, is going to find its way into more than one anthology. It was far too good a tale, we felt, not to be shared by the rest of us who don't have access to the *Anglers' Club Bulletin,* the privately circulated publication where it first appeared, and we are proud to have been able to pass it along to you—fishermen and non-anglers alike—in these pages. About the story and himself the author says—

I have fished many of the Eastern trout streams for fifty years and have written a lot about the Beaverkill. Previous stories, however, were straight fishing stuff. "Over the Bank" was born during a trip to try out a new rod on the Beaverkill. In imagination I tested it against bigger and bigger fish, until it was conquering one as big as a man. What would be its chances, I wondered, against man himself—but of necessity, one who was as unaware of what he was fighting as a trout would be?

I wrote the story but regarded it as too fantastic to be commercial, and the editor to whom I did show it agreed with me. That year I had been assigned the task of getting out the bulletin for the fishing club to which I belonged—the Angler's Club of New York. The deadline arrived and it was discovered that fellow members had submitted little material. Something had to be used to fill out the issue—and in went "Over the Bank." Sparse Gray Hackle liked the story and showed it to a friend, who in turn showed it to Kenneth White, who asked permission to use it in *Adventure.*

My regular fishing stories and articles have appeared in a number of the magazines. Four of them have been put into book form by the Derrydale Press under the title of "The Spicklefisherman and Others." "The Spicklefisherman" was later included in Dr. Henry van Dyke's "Creelful of Fishing Stories," his selection of the best fishing stories of all time.

Now that Spring's here, it is my hope that we all may reach our favorite smiling valley by a less dangerous route than that of Morland and that no hairy "Ug" will spoil our pleasant fishing with his pestiferous darts. But—don't forget your cigarettes.

Mr. White forgot to mention that he is a 30-year Veteran Boy Scout and a member of the Executive Board of the Manhattan Council. Also, that he went overseas in 1918 with the Y. M. C. A. and served as Hut Secretary with the 3rd Aviation Section at Issoudun. "That's ancient history today," he says, "but I regret that I can't get into the mess again, mud and all."

GEORGES SURDEZ wrote "Wings Over Gibraltar" some weeks before Hitler's Balkan campaign and while Wavell's army was making things very hot indeed for the Italians who, unsupported by Nazi mechanized forces, were retreating as fast as they could toward their Tripolitanian bases. The North African picture has changed much in the last couple of months and by the time the story hits the newsstands "The Rock" may well be the focal point of attack by the Axis. It will be interesting to watch the part played by the French in Casablanca when new developments occur, as they are bound to. Of his novelette Surdez says—

As a rule, I like to get my information from people who have participated actively in the things I write about. That was impossible to achieve with the retaliatory air raids by French planes from Morocco upon the British fortress at Gibraltar. I knew the locale well enough, I have seen Gibraltar several times. Once from the air, but from a very long distance to the east. However, two Frenchmen who were in Morocco at the time, who knew some of the pilots who took part, who spoke to them both before and after the raids, gave me some good material. An old friend of mine, who happened to be in Tangier—about as far from Gib as Staten Island is from the Battery in New York, I would say—added some details. I got the three stories, told me at separate times by men who did not know each other, and checked them by comparison.

It seemed very clear to me that the British did not try very hard to knock down French machines during the first raid, but that two days afterward, when it was repeated and the younger pilots—you give a guy of twenty a plane and a few bombs and he'll try to do something with them—grew pretty bold and dove at the ships, they turned loose. One chap told me that all planes returned, another that he had seen some crash, in the second raid. Nevertheless, the general opinion was that the British had not fought back as hard as when Italian squadrons flew over. Perhaps because the Italians used fewer machines, having a trip of two thousand miles to cover. Save for possible damage to warships in the harbor, bombing Gibraltar seems futile for military purposes. Although much of the civilian population was evacuated to Tangier and Madeira, when I average the figures supplied me, some sixty-odd people were killed. For a gesture . . .

Hundreds of French pilots took their machines from France to North Africa, between June 22nd and mid-July 1940, hoping they would have a chance to fight against the real enemy. The desertions to the British started on June 26th, and became very frequent. It is a fact that a military court-martial acquitted a number of aviators who had crashed or been caught trying to leave for Gibraltar. One of them was the son of a French industrial magnate whose name is known all over the world. Evidently, such acquittals did not please the Nazis, and they brought pressure to bear on Vichy—they hold millions of French people as hostages, for of late the courts are dishing out stiff sentences, although I have heard of no executions. Those sentences will not be served in full, unless the war lasts even longer than is feared. Even in the eventuality of a definite German victory, the moment peace is signed, there will be an amnesty for such offenses. Those in prison will no more be kept there than those Frenchmen now fighting for Britain will be lined up and shot by the thousands. The import of the sentences is really that the chaps will be kept under guard for duration.

The episode of the near-duel between Brocart and Captain Moccia may appear odd. There is a law against duels in France, and in theory, killing a man in an affair of honor is manslaughter, wounding him is assault. Nevertheless, duels do occur, for I have seen them. There is nothing funny in the spectacle, either. An encounter with blades is thrilling, and even a duel with pistols gives you a strong sense of drama and danger. There was one in Oran when I lived there that I can't forget, because the name of one of the principals sounded like something out of a Dumas novel: Monsieur de Rougemont.

I don't leap at the conclusion that it was common knowledge because I knew it was coming off days in advance—the armorer who checked the weapons was a Legion armorer and a good friend of mine, but the police must have been tipped off. Nevertheless, the two plain-clothesmen did not show up until all was over. No one was hit, not even the proverbial innocent bystander, but I did not feel like laughing. I had seen a pellet of lead shoved down the barrel of each one of the pistols, and I realized that if one of them hit a skull, there would be a mess. That quite congealed my sense of humor.

One of my characters refers to de Maupassant's story, "The Coward," in which a man becomes so nervous at having to fight in a duel in the morning that he shoots himself to get the suspense over with. That is a fine study. The fear of a duel is made up of several fears, fear of death or injury, fear of showing fear in public, fear of being made ridiculous, and a variety of stage-fright. An encounter with swords must be tougher to face than one with pistols, for pistols are discharged in one second, while epées may be used for many minutes.

While in a sporting competition, fencers are facing men of about their own class. Duels offer surprises, however, as there has been no careful grading of the opponents. As in most good games, whether purely mental like chess or directly physical, like boxing, no man who is not in the very top flight can be sure that he will not run up against some guy who'll make him seem awkward.

I know that during a war duels must be postponed, as national interest has priority over personal honor. But Captain Moccia's superior could not evoke that in a case involving a Frenchman. Until the Albanian campaign against the Greeks and the Libyan shows, the Italians mourned openly that they had not been given a chance against the French, a real chance, without German help! They have enough troubles now, and have stopped worrying over minor disappointments.

The "troubles" to which Surdez refers were, of course, the Italian routs westward from the Egyptian border and in East Africa. May they continue unabated, even though the Fascists are bolstered now by Nazi support!

JUST for the record: John Russell, whose "Glove-Handed" appeared in the April issue, *is* the same John *Edward* Russell who wrote "Proof By Peril" for us back in October, 1911. We had a nice note from him clarifying our speculations as to his identity and he agrees with us that thirty years is too long for him to have been absent from our contents page and promises to have his agent submit another story soon.

WE'VE just finished reading "Delilah" by Marcus Goodrich, a remarkably vivid and authentic picture of life aboard a destroyer of the U. S. battle fleet. Delilah—the ship herself—is the protagonist of this extraordinary novel (Farrar & Rinehart are the publishers and it's current in bookstores and lending libraries) which crams into five hundred odd pages the story of the craft and the men aboard her during the six months period just prior to America's declaration of war in 1917. Beautifully written, perilously close to being Conradian in many of its passages, it bulges with sheer adventure and gave us as exciting an evening's reading as we've had in many a month. Among the rich gallery of thumbnail etchings of the men who formed Delilah's crew we were particularly impressed by the following of Portness, the Radio Electrician.

". . . the long, unmolested hours that he passed in the little steel shack between the foremast and the forward conning-tower, headphones in place, were anything but irksome to him. They gave him larger opportunity to indulge the chief pleasure of his life and more time for the profitable little industry that helped him finance his loaning operations" (i. e. the fashioning of silver rings, stamped with the Navy crest, hammered out of Mexican pesos obtained at Shanghai). "Of the total net profit from his industry, his pay and his usury, he sent one-third of the money to his mother in Detroit and spent the rest, except for the small sum that he mailed off each year for a subscription to *Adventure Magazine*, precisely as the other men spent theirs. In this magazine he found his greatest pleasure, especially in those of its stories that dealt with the French Foreign Legion; and he looked forward to its arrival, regularly every month if the ship

were around Manila, in delayed batches of two or three if she were up along the China Coast or down amongst the southern islands, as his ancestors had looked forward to harvest time. Sitting there beside his spark-gap, his ears mechanically on the alert for the slightest disturbance within their covering receivers, he would exhaust each page of every issue. Nothing save the demands of his instrument served to distract him very long from those pages of dangerous excitement and glamorous travail. He had read them through typhoons that seemed about to pound Delilah into the depths of the China Sea. When there were no more pages to read, he worked on one of the rings . . . while he dreamed of the fulfilment of the promise he continually made himself, a promise that, some day before he died, he was going to pull himself up out of this monotonous grind of everyday, ordinary restriction and discipline in which he was wasting his life and risk it like a man, those men in the magazine, for something worth seeing and doing."

The above gave us a warm glow. We've always known our magazine had a wide and appreciative audience in our armed services and followed the flag wherever it flew, but such confirmation was nevertheless welcome. Mr. Goodrich erred slightly in a matter of detail—there were no Foreign Legion stories in *Adventure* during the period about which he writes—but anyway "Delilah" is a swell novel and we know you'll get as big a kick out of it as we did.

JOSEPH ALLAN DUNN
Jan. 21, 1872—Mar. 25, 1941

Just too late to include in last month's *Camp-Fire* came the sad news that J. Allan Dunn had passed away at the Columbus Hospital in New York where he had been a patient only three days. His death resulted from a complication of ailments which were traceable to a tropical disease contracted in the South Pacific many years ago, where he sailed his own barkentine, "The Laughing Lady," and became an authority on Polynesian and Melanesian folklore.

His adventurous career after graduating from Oxford in '93 took him as a correspondent to the Spanish-American War and the Russo-Japanese War, and on explorational expeditions to China, Korea, Indo-China, Burma, Malaysia, the Dutch Indies and New Guinea.

It was this background of travel and exploration that gave him the material for the hundreds of stories he wrote through the years for many magazines, particularly *Adventure*. "The Greenstone Mask," his first yarn to appear in the pages of this magazine, was published in the issue of October, 1914. Since that time he sold over seventy-five short stories, novelettes and serials to *Adventure*, most of them laid in the South Seas he knew and loved so well. "Rotorua Rex," "Salt of the Sea," "Cogged Dice," "Rovers Three" and "Barehanded Castaways" are perhaps his best-remembered. Besides his innumerable magazine stories he was also the author of two guidebooks, "California for the Tourist" and "California for the Sportsman." He edited *Sunset Magazine* in 1907. He was a member of the Explorers Club, the Circumnavigators, the Advertising Club, and The Adventurers.

He is survived by his third wife, who was Loyala Lee Sandford at the time of their marriage in 1936.

SOME of our authors read *Adventure* with the same enthusiasm with which they write for it. Georges Surdez enjoyed R. W. Daly's Peter Dickoe stories as much as we did, and when we expressed interest in knowing more about General Hoche, who once planned to invade England, as mentioned in the yarns, he sat down and wrote us as follows.

The fact that you found only a few lines about Lazare Hoche has been trotting on my mind. It ain't right. And I feel like writing a hundred thousand words or so, a sketchy biography, you know, with diagrams for the battles etc. In fact, I once played around with the idea of a book, imagining his recovery

from the sickness that killed him and the changes brought about by that survival. Then some frog writer came out with "Si Robespierre," and there were a flock of 'if' volumes. But not that one. Hoche was a 'pure' man in the sense applied to the great Romans. He was a successful general, self-made, who never lost his sense of honor, seems never to have sacrificed anyone to his personal ambitions.

He was the son of a cook, born in Versailles in 1768. There were any number of anecdotes about his childhood in the French school readers. The French Revolution found him a sergeant in the army, as far as a man of his lowly birth could go under the kings. When the noble-born officers took powders (plural of: a powder.) he was one of the many sergeants elected or promoted to commissions. They appear to have had good non-coms in the Royal Army in those days, guys like Massena, Augereau, Ney, Lannes, Murat, who became King of Naples, Bernadotte who died as Charles XIV of Sweden. The American Army axiom that many good top-sergeants have been spoiled by being made into poor captains did not seem to work in Revolutionary France. I think Hoche was as good a general as any of them, and I consider a couple superior to Napoleon—and I bet that burns him up—and he was not money-hungry like Massena, Augereau etc., glory-hungry like Murat and Bernadotte, hot-tempered and rash like Lannes, nor a heroic sucker like Ney.

A sergeant at twenty-one, Lazare Hoche was a general before he was twenty-five. At twenty-five, he was promoted to command the Army of the Moselle, over the head of General Pichegru. You can find a lot of right-thinking dope on that episode in the Souvenirs of Charles Nodier, but Nodier leans to Pichegru, who was an old friend of his old man. Pichegru was no bum, either, only seven or eight years older than Hoche, a learned officer—he had been an instructor at Brienne Military School before they shortened Louis XVI, and Napoleone Buonaparte, a dirty little Corsican who didn't wash his neck—nothing historical in that statement, purely a personal supposition — had been one of his pupils. I side with the belief that Pichegru, who was dickering with the Royalists on the quiet, also dickered with St. Just, Robespierre's pal and agent of the Committee of Public Safety with the Army, to do Hoche dirt.

Nevertheless, Hoche knocked the Austrians out of the Weissenburg Lines, pretty formidable fortifications for those times, burned their pants whenever he caught up with them, at Gemesheim, Worms and so on, and finally booted them altogether out of Alsace. As a reward, he was arrested and put in jail. In those days, when a French general won victories, he was suspected of treason for not doing even better. Nowadays, you can lose a whole war, collect a nice pension and cultivate roses, and everyone knows you didn't make any intentional mistakes.

Hoche did not get a trial. Robespierre and St. Just were given the works, and he was freed. He drew the dirtiest job available at the time, the pacification of the pro-Bourbon province of Vendée, where the peasants, as fanatical as dervishes, were bushwhacking the armies of the Republic. Neither side took prisoners then, the Vendeans being addicted to skinning people alive and crucifixion, the Government columns trundling a guillotine with the cannon and baggage.

Hoche tackled the jobs. A sizable expeditionary force, composed largely of emigres, was landed at Quiberon by the

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British Fleet. Hoche slashed it to pieces, those that were not shot were drowned. Within a few months, he captured the leaders of the peasants, Charette and Stofflet. Then, having shown that he could be tough, he showed himself humane. His instructions to his troops are in sharp contrast with other army orders of that period.

He then prepared an expedition against England, which was to land in Ireland first. He sailed, but a severe storm broke up his fleet, and the attempt had to be postponed. While another expedition was being prepared, he was dispatched to the Army of Sambre et Meuse, which was not doing so well in the Northeast of France.

He did not wait to be attacked, knowing that a French Army rushing on the enemy is five times as strong as when waiting for the enemy, crossed the Rhine, won a series of victories, climaxed by that of Altenkirchen. His plans were sharp, his execution rapid, and he had plenty of guts when it was needed to encourage his men. There are no 'lucky' wins on his record, they were all earned. He did not have, perhaps he did not need, the phenomenal luck of Bonaparte, whose bacon was saved several times by events he had not planned, for instance at Marengo, where he was tincanning all over the place when Desaix showed up in time to save the day—and to get himself bumped off.

Hoche then was given the command of united armies, that of Sambre and Meuse and that of the Rhine, to be known as The Army of Germany. He died suddenly, at the age of twenty-nine, of some intestinal disorder. Rumor still has it that he may have been poisoned, although it may have been just something he ate. And, obviously, that ended him.

Hoche was only a few months older than Bonaparte. At the time of his death, his prestige and popularity were at least as great. And he had a reputation for honesty. He had not used some of the rather shabby methods that Bonaparte had resorted to to get ahead. For instance, he did not win his first reputation by dispersing Parisian mobs with grapeshot. He did not get his first big assignment by marrying the ex-sweetheart of the politician Barras (this isn't a gossip column, so I don't list the others) and until his death, his military achievements compare very well.

Of course, there is a theory that like Bonaparte himself in the beginning, he was a sort of a quarter-back using plays invented by Coach Lazare Carnot, the Organizer of Victory. But Carnot's instructions left much to the individual general. Hoche seems to me to have been perhaps a bit less brilliant in conception than the young Bonaparte, but more reflective—headier. Just how good he was is uncertain—he had no serious defeat, and won in the end, always.

What would have happened had he lived? One possibility is that he would have been hypnotized by Bonaparte as others were. But he had a certain sturdy integrity that might have turned him the other way. When Bonaparte threw the Directory out on its ear, there was no general in France to be opposed to him. Practically all famous generals had dabbled in politics, had conspired against this or that. The few good Republicans were without prestige or following.

That could not have been the case with Hoche. He would have been admired as much as a military leader, and far more respected. Even his enemies liked him. Some of the generals who helped Bonaparte had been very close to Hoche, and might have sided with him. His soldiers

(Continued on page 122)

A FEAST OF THRILLERS

For the crime connoisseur! Ken O'Hara—H. H. STINSON'S nonesuch newshound predicts Homicide will be *Calling All Hearses* before they stop those defense contract murders.

Roscoe Atticus, peg-legged pundit of politics, breaks a case just in time for the *Democrat's* deadline, in *The Bishop and the Tinkling Belle*, one of WYATT BLASSINGAME'S best.

Bill Lennox, General Consolidated Pictures' trouble-shooter, plays a part that's *Not in the Script*, in an "on location" murder, unraveled by W. T. BALLARD. Plus another exploit of C. G. TAHNEY'S miniature Sherlock, Nickie; a new story of CLEVE F. ADAMS' squad car boys, Dewey and Englehardt; and more—in the great JULY issue!

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ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewhere

TO TRAIN a setter for hunting woodcock.

Request:—Would you tell me what the proper method is in starting to train an English setter dog for woodcock and ruffed grouse?

The dog is 18 months old and has had little or no training. He is wellbred and is very intelligent. I have recently bought him and he seems to be very unruly, or is this condition due to me being strange to him?

What good book on dogs and their training could I get in this country or the U. S.?

—Heber J. Cripps
Box 128, Sussex N. B. Canada

Reply by Freeman Lloyd:—Regarding the training of your English setter dog for woodcock shooting, as he seems to be a very intelligent dog, he might not be so hard to break. Most young dogs are more or less wild, but a little line-handling of them where there is game soon quiets them down; also, pull up or steady them when their noses acquaint them that game is near at hand. The training of a setter is much too long a subject to fully explain within the course of a letter so you are advised to get a copy of "Setters and Their Training," price $2.00, mail prepaid, from A. Campbell, Floor 21, 515 Madison Avenue, New York City.

WOODCRAFT in the shadow of the blitz.

Request:—I am writing to you as your name is given in *Adventure* as their woodcraft and camping expert.

I am a 17-year-old English boy, intensely keen on open air life and woodcraft. I have been in the scout movement, but left because, in my opinion, it is drifting from a backwoods organization into a partly outdoor citizens' training association. There is no real backwoods organization in this country that I can join. Therefore I am writing to ask you whether there are any good woodcraft, backwoods organizations in America, and if so, should I be able to join as an overseas member? Secondly, can you tell me the titles of any good woodcraft, etc., magazines published in America?

Recently, I wrote to Thompson Seton at Santa Fé to find out whether his Indian scouts were still in existence but it appears that they have faded out.

Thirdly, do you know of any "pen pals" service through which I can get in touch with Westerners and outdoor enthusiasts.

I hope you will not mind me writing, but I read *Adventure* and have seen your address in there. Also, you are a woodcraft expert and will no doubt appreciate the feelings of another woodcraft enthusiast who wants to join the comradeship of other enthusiasts.

I shall be extremely grateful if you will answer my questions for me. Thanking you very much in anticipation, and best wishes.

—J. C. C. Jordan
"Woodlands," Chessetts Wood Road, Hockley Heath
No. Birmingham, England

Reply by Paul M. Fink:—The thing you deplore about the Scouting movement, that it is becoming an outdoor citizens' training association, is the one thing that has kept it alive through all these years since Baden-Powell organized it in 1907. The many character-building teachings and the training for public service it offers have justified the interest so many thousands of men and boys have taken in it and I know well that today, within a handful of miles of your home, many a young man is serving his country in its day of danger far more

efficiently by reason of his Scout training. You will find that no organization, devoted to the pleasure of its members only, will last for many years. This, I fear, is why Thompson-Seton's Woodcraft Indians (I remember them very well as a boy) did not catch the popular fancy. And that doesn't mean I do not have a high regard for Thompson-Seton and his knowledge of woodcraft. Several of his excellent books are on my shelves today.

I do not know of any organization in this country, like you desire, sufficiently strong to be taking on overseas members, nor do I know of any magazines devoted solely to woodcraft. We have many sporting magazines, such as FIELD & STREAM, OUTDOOR LIFE, SPORTS AFIELD, etc., that devote a small department to the subject, but the greater part of the contents concern hunting and fishing.

Neither can I recommend any "pen-pal" service to you. You might try writing to Boy Scout headquarters in the cities of Denver, Colorado; El Paso, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Boise, Idaho, or other large western cities, asking that they put you in touch with some young man of about your age and with the same interests. By so doing you will very probably make the acquaintance of some wide-awake, interesting young fellows.

If you want to acquire the best book of woodcraft, secure a copy of "Camping & Woodcraft" by Horace Kephart, my predecessor in this department (Outing Publishing Co., New York). This is a veritable encyclopedia. Another more recent book that would be of interest to you is "Woodcraft," by Bernard S. Mason (A. S. Barnes & Co., New York). Perhaps your bookseller can import these for you.

I understand full well your craving for the wilderness, for I've had it many years myself. Fortunately, I have lived within easy striking distance of the wildest mountain region of Eastern America, at a time when it was almost unknown to the rest of the world and when I could go and lose myself for days on end and never see anything to indicate that man had ever been there before me. Those days are now gone, but I have many happy memories of trips into those high hills.

With the very best wishes for long years of enjoyment of the outdoors.

OF sea bass and their finny brethren—but treat the stripers kindly.

Request:—Where within 250-300 miles of New York City is there a good fishing place where two men may fish from an outboard driven row boat, and where there are accommodations and row boats for hire? I have heard of the Chesapeake Bay at the southern end of Maryland as a good place but have heard of no particular town or location.

—Thos. J. Read
4100-43d Ave., Sunnyside, L. I.

Reply by C. Blackburn Miller:—You do not specify in your letter just when you desire to do this fishing but in any of the waters which I specify you should be able to obtain results from the middle of May on.

You mentioned in your letter Chesapeake Bay. There is good fishing in that stretch of water. I would, however, advise the Eastern Shore on which there are numerous points, such as Centreville, Claiborne, Cambridge, etc. There are numerous bays and estuaries running in from the main body of water where excellent striped bass fish can be had.

Delaware Bay of course is noted for its fishing as well and is admirably adapted to an outboard motor.

Farther north is Barnegat Bay where there is good fish, weak fish, porgy, and at times striped bass. You can stay at Barnegat City, Beachhaven on the Eastern shore or Waretown, Forked River and numerous other places on the Western Shores. At all these places mentioned there are accomodations and row boats for hire.

Mr. Miller appended a few notes on the striped bass and the danger of its extinction by commercial fishermen, and we are glad to publish them here in the interests of better sport fishing and earnestly hope our expert's plea is heeded.

The legion of sportsmen who seek their recreation in fishing along the thousands of miles of beaches which compose the Atlantic seaboard have at last joined issue in defense of their favorite fish—the Striped Bass.

The eastern fishermen are determined to emulate the example of the anglers of the Pacific Coast, who imported the spe-

cies to their shores some thirty years ago and having assured them of protection now enjoy the finest Striped Bass fishing in the world.

For decades the sportsmen along the Atlantic seaboard have sought to induce the commercial interests to pursue less destructive methods of fishing and to grant the species immunity at least during the spawning season, but their plea fell upon deaf ears.

They watched with regret the decimation and finally the extinction of our sheepshead, sturgeon and, had it not been for government aid, the shad from northern waters. And it was only too evident that unless drastic steps were taken the Striped Bass would join their ranks.

In Chesapeake Bay, Md., which is the largest nursery of the species, but little protection is granted them. Varios types of nets are used in their capture during that period when the fish enter the Bay to spawn and even in winter, when great schools lie dormant in certain selective areas, they are dredged out with nets and grappling hooks until the entire school is destroyed.

This wholesale butchery has its natural effect on the entire coast line for there are but few fish left to pursue their migrations either to the north or south.

Canada whose Striped Bass fisheries in the past was one of her most lucrative assets, now considers their numbers negligible. The cause being that the smelt fishermen with their fine meshed nets destroyed the millions of young bass which had been spawned in those waters.

It is a startling case of a well organized minority attempting to dictate a policy to a body that far outnumbers them. In the case of New Jersey there are not only estimated a million anglers who fish the shores but there are untold numbers who make a living from the presence of these fishermen such as the purveyors of bait, fishing tackle, hotels and restaurants, railroads and gasoline stations. Opposed to them are a handful of commercial men, about two hundred and fifty in the State of New Jersey, who operate some seventeen hundred nets and whose efforts contribute towards the decimation of the species.

The sportsmen have adopted the slogan "Make the Striped Bass a Game Fish" and they are determined through their respective legislatures to remove the fish from commercial markets, assure it of protection during the spawning season, adopt a size limit of twenty inches and limit the catch to five fish per rod.

If these measures are adopted, there is little question but that the sportsmen of the east will be able, in a short time, to enjoy fishing such as the anglers of the Pacific coast experience.

There are doubtless many readers of *Adventure* who are interested in the preservation of the Striped Bass and will add their influence and aid to this measure in their respective states.

EXPERT to expert on the Navajo Mountain region of southern Utah —and the missing Donald J. Smith (See *Lost Trails*), who is presumed to have vanished somewhere in that vicinity. C. C. Anderson, our *Ask Adventure* authority on the region in question, replies below to a note from Victor Shaw, our mining expert, who has more than a little familiarity with desert conditions himself.

I was interested in the letter from Victor Shaw which was printed in the April *Camp-Fire*. It proves to me that he is just the kind of man I thought he was, well able to care for himself in any country, anytime. But it takes experience such as he has had, and plenty of it, to be able to know what to do when you get into trouble.

When I wrote young Smith (the brother of the missing man) I was writing about conditions as they were *then*, August, 1940. What I can't seem to tell people, and make them understand, is that there has been an extended and severe drought in this country for ten years. They had not received a beneficial rain for ten years until the middle of September, 1940. I can assure Mr. Shaw that there was no emerald green anyplace around there this summer and early fall. I am enclosing a sheet from my notes, taken during August 1940. When a man is nutty enough to hire a horse and ride six miles (in order to get down) and back in order to see how deep the San Juan River actually is, I think he is doing a fairly thorough job.

On August 8th, 1940 the water in the San Juan River at the Bridge below Mexican Hat was less than 75 feet wide. It hardly came over a horses fetlocks, being between a foot and six inches deep, very muddy, slow and turbid. The sheer rock channel here is 240 feet wide. The new bridge is also 240 feet wide and 48 feet above the bottom of the river. Residents near the Bridge say that the water is down six feet from the normal water

level for this time of the year. It has dried up three times in history and this year looks like it might dry up again. This wild river washed out the old bridge built in 1909, which was 32 feet above the level of the bottom; imagine water more than 32 feet high and 240 feet across! There is a story of an old man who when the river dried up in 1895 washed out some gold around here. He waited for 40 years for the river to dry up again, living by doing odd jobs and almost starving. When the river did not again dry up, after the new bridge was built a few years ago, he jumped off it, killing himself. Just got tired of waiting.

Of course Mr. Shaw could find water —he knows how, and when he wrote, he knew it should be there. But a stranger *doesn't* know it is there or should be there. I did not get to Walker Creek, Tyende or Navajo washes (Mr. Shaw made them sound quite close—he covered a lot of country in that letter—and made it sound easy; which it isn't) but Mr. Shaw would no doubt be quite surprised if I told him that Chinle Creek, which rises in Canyon de Chelly and is a perennial stream, was this last August, near the mouth, running for a ways, disappearing for a ways and reappearing. In other words almost dry; and that near the San Juan. He is a little mixed up in a few things but not seriously; and has obviously been over the country and has the general idea. Why he thought word should trickle into Shiprock is more than I know. The Indian Agency was at Gallup until 1936 and then it was moved to Window Rock. He knows about the "telegraph" all right. I believe I mentioned it in a former letter about Smith only I called it "grapevine" —you bet it works, but it hasn't been any help in finding Smith as yet.

Sincerely,
C. C. Anderson

We have received an interesting illustrated folder of Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Ridge from Mr. Rupert Larson of Los Angeles. It has, on the back, what looks like an excellent map of the section and if it can be arranged we shall try to reproduce it here next month. The pictures in the folder, incidentally, make it seem like mighty tough country and no spot for a tenderfoot to go wandering by himself.

HAWAII, and adventure just around the corner! Curtain rising on the drama of the Pacific.

Gentlemen:

A letter heading your *Ask Adventure* column, March issue, has stayed in my mind and refuses to depart until I answer with my own contribution. Mr. Hampton has a bad case of wanderlust; he wants to travel around the world cheaply. I am afraid Mr. Robert Spiers Benjamin (A.A.'s authority on globe trotting, who seemed a bit pessimistic about possibilities of engaging in his favorite sport these days) misses a good bet when he forgets Hawaii. Over here right now one of the great adventures of the century is in the making, and Mr. Hampton, if he is old enough and really wants to, can have his part in it. I refer to the Government defense work which is going on in the Pacific area.

My husband is an architect who is doing plans for the Navy defense project on Wake Island. We feel very lucky that we are able to be in the thick of it and yet earn a living at the same time. Mr. Hampton, no matter how humble his talents, can do the same.

There is a demand for laborers to go to Wake, Midway, Palmyra, Johnson, Samoa, and the Hawaiian Islands. They are being recruited now on the mainland and every passenger ship arriving brings in more men, their transportation from California paid by the company. The following jobs are open: carpenters, steel workers, welders, machinists, pipe fitters, concrete men, draftsmen, boat operators, surveyors, tractor and shovel operators, truck drivers, clerks, cooks, meat cutters, store keepers, time keepers. There is also a need for male nurses and orderlies. Practically every man can do at least one of the above things.

Workers who go down to those islands sign a contract with the Five Companies for a minimum of six months. The lowest wage is ninety dollars a month, including all living expenses and transportation. Of this the company allows a man ten dollars a month in cash, while the balance is paid to his checking account at a bank in Honolulu. When he returns from his six months of work, he has about $500 in the bank, generally more, if he does any amount of overtime work while he is there. It is not uncommon for workers to return with over a thousand dollars savings.

With such a stake a man can actually give serious thought to travelling on to romantic places. Six months hard labor on a tropical island would be an education and a hardening process for any man.

If Mr. Hampton, or anyone who reads

this, is really interested, he can make his way to California and apply for a job at the office of the Five Companies, at Alameda. This company is now one of the largest of its kind in the world, and is often known as Hawaiian-Raymond-Turner, although there are actually two other construction outfits in the combine.

Incidentally, there is a great shortage of men over here in Hawaii now, as many are leaving local jobs to work at Pearl Harbor where pay is high, overtime comes often, and the need for men is acute. We know personally one lad who never made over $40 per week in his life, who has been educated only as far as the sixth grade, and came over here six months ago to get a job out at Pearl Harbor at a wage of about $260 per month. He's still a little bit bewildered by it all.

If any reader of your column wants to know more about these islands, let him read "Midway to Murder," a murder mystery by Margaret Taylor Yates. The locale is authentically described, as she spent some time there gathering material. (Note: This is not a plug.)

I hope you will pass this information on to Hr. Hampton, as it might be the first step toward that adventure for him. This is the crossroads of the Pacific, where adventure is always around the corner, just now it is the spot where anything can happen, any time. The Pacific is the scene of some of today's greatest drama, and whoever comes over here now can get into it just as the curtain is about to rise.

Sincere aloha,

—Mrs. Wm. F. Elliott
740 Maui Street
Honolulu, T.H.

We rushed a copy of the interesting letter above off by Clipper to John Snell, our expert on Hawaii who is a neighbor of Mrs. Elliott in Honolulu, to see if he had anything to add to her almost-too-good-to-be-true remarks. His answer just arrived and we are happy to include it.

Mrs. Elliott is correct regarding employment conditions in this integral part of the United States—due, of course, to the millions upon millions of dollars worth of defense construction in the Territory and this region of the Pacific which includes Wake, Midway, Palmyra, Johnson, and Samoa, at all of which military or naval projects are underway. In substantiation of this situation I am enclosing clippings of two stories which appeared in adjoining columns of this morning's HONOLULU ADVERTISER regarding a shortage of stevedores at Honolulu and the fact that the volume of Hawaii's trade in January set a new high record.

As far as I can ascertain, the only unemployment existing in Hawaii is among the absolutely unskilled laborers and the male unemployables, as well as female office or other "white collar" individuals. The shortage among semi-skilled and skilled workers in the various defense projects and the consequent necessity for the importation from the mainland United States of scores of the workers listed by Mrs. Elliott is becoming a matter of grave concern to certain civic leaders in the Territory. They are asking what is to become of these hundreds—if not thousands—of imported workers when the present defense projects are completed. On March 10 the United Press carried from Washington a story on the passage by the Senate of two unprecedented navy authorization bills providing a total of more than $54,000,000 worth of projects for the Hawaiian area alone and supplemental cash appropriations of approximately $40,000,000 for work to be undertaken in the Hawaiian area between now and June 30. How long will be required to complete these projects is hard to estimate, but it certainly should take several years or more, so that perhaps the apprehension regarding a recurrence of unemployment in Hawaii is premature.

Mrs. Elliott's citation of the example of one boy getting a job at Pearl Harbor at about $260 per month is only one of many similar instances which have come to my attention.

Cordially,
John Snell

Better get your duffle bags packed for T. H. We may even see you there ourselves.

GOLD in them thar hills!

Request:—The blood of a real sportsman courses through the veins of a real prospector. He is not a bad sort, and willing to take a chance, a chance of a discovery, for instance, that would place him in position to enjoy the extravagance that much gold gives him. Especially at this age, when he feels himself a-slipping, there is just that left: make money and spend it, or give it to friends that they may enjoy their life's endeavors. So I review the chances of a trip to a tropical

country—fever, snakes, insects, jungle travel, etc., but what's the difference? On the other hand, old age overtakes him and he sits down and rots. So if I can arrange my finances, I would like to make the trip anyway.

My reply from the Geographic Society stated they had nothing but a pocket map of Central America, including Honduras, so I wrote them to send it, but the stamps got lost somewhere I guess. I have a communication from G. S. Howard, New York, saying they had a good map of Honduras with considerable information for $2.75, so I hesitate. I enclose my reply from the Secretary of Agriculture in Tegucigalpa, which I had to have translated, and it seems there has been a great deal more mining going on in the Lago de Yojoa region in past years than there is at the present. I did not learn the elevation of the Lake, and am thinking the gulches much higher up is where one would want to land. And I don't believe a great deal of time would be needed to demonstrate the possibilities of the gravel.

I haven't the contour of Central America well in mind. The distance from coast to coast for instance, or the distance of mountain ranges, etc. But one thing is certain and that is that piles of gold came out of that country by the crudest methods of extraction. And moreover, they are working over the old mining camps today in N. A. So, no one got it all.

I will have to remain here until the rainy season is over in Honduras anyway, so if you think of a locality that might be productive, let me know. It rained yesterday and today after a two days' letup, so I am handicapped. I am in a cabin rented by the week. Sorry to hear of your pleurisy trouble. Hope you are all right now. I got something, I don't know what, but it puts me out of business anyway. Drop me a line.

—Victor Mumbrue,
Pomona, Cal.

11628¾ Mayfield Avenue,
West Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Mumbrue:

Replying to yours of 14th inst. in re Honduras Republic, I sure get a kick out of your explanation of why you plan to go down there, as it proves there's plenty of life in the old boy, yet. I'm somewhat in the same frame of mind, so far as that goes. About myself, I mean.

Now, about this Lake Yojoa: the lake is of good size judging from my map, being about 30 miles long by 12-15 wide. It evidently lies in a wide valley that isn't so very high above sea level—i. e. in the 65-odd miles (air line) downriver to the sea, its average grade (flow-drop) is not very great. On my map there is a figure 650, which I take to mean its elevation above sea level; and if so, it's about 10-ft drop to the mile. It is on a short branch of the Rio Ulua, which hits the sea coast about 12 miles east of Puerto Cortez. Another large river mouth lies between, that of the Rio Chamelecon which rises back on the Guatamala-Honduras boundary.

The Rep. of Honduras is about the size of the State of Mississippi, measuring airline about 400 miles east to west, and 200 north to south. So some of these rivers draining inland mountain areas with 8000-ft. peaks have some volume of water, although a fall of 10 feet in a mile will not permit any bad falls and few rapids dangerous to a canoe or dugout, but *I'd* never tackle river travel in those lowlands, but go by plane.

Your enclosed reply from Senor Aguirre bears out my own idea of general mining conditions in there; which is, there's very little. I'm rusty on my Spanish, but can sabe the most of what he says—that few mining claims have been recorded last year, and no mines of importance have been developed in the vicinity of Lake Yojoa. However, in my mention of the lake, I didn't imply prospecting in *that* drainage basin necessarily. What I indicated was that this lake and its outlet-river affords a comparatively easy route of travel to reach good country in this part of the interior, either by plane, or by native canoe. If you recall my first reply, I indicated the short distance west to gulch creeks that flow into the Santiago River, to be reached in a few miles cross-country west of the lake. Planes can get you to this lake in less than one hour from Puerto Cortez and set you and outfit down on the west shore of the lake for a base camp, from which you could try out the gravels on the *heads* of several creeks, where you would find the coarsest placer-gold, if any exists as is supposed. It is a question whether those creeks are navigable, and doubtful if a plane could land you as closely on wheels, anywhere in those mountain gulches.

The main ranges (watershed point) lie about 2/3ds the distance south across this Republic from Atlantic to Pacific, so that the streams flowing north into the Atlantic are the longest in Honduras and the Rio Ulua rises *due west* from Tegu-

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cigalpa making it 150 miles long *(air-line)*, not taking in its countless bends and curves. No doubt it's over 250 really.

Quite a few prospectors writing me have been interested in the Olancho region, just north of Juticalpa, on the upper Patuco River over in the east-central part of Honduras. That's where the one big mine there is situated, the Rosario-Honduras & New York—a silver mine that has operated to my knowledge for 50 years or over. I've understood though that this nugget stuff the Indians bring out comes to the Atlantic coast ports and including Puerto Cortez. Maybe some comes from Olancho, but it wouldn't come out at Puerto Cortez from Olancho. Get it? Granting that, the less mining around Yojoa there is, the better; and Sr. Aguirre in his reply refers only (or chiefly) I think, to lode mines, rather than placers. But in that respect, your idea of testing old lode mines in there is sound and might easily develop something really worth while, at that.

With best wishes for health and prosperity,

Most cordially,
Victor Shaw.

THE CAMP-FIRE

(Continued from page 115)

would have stuck to him, for he could win devotion.

It is easy to see, checking over the events of November 9th and 10th, 1799, that Bonaparte's coup could have been frustrated by a resolute stand. Even if there had been no time to call Hoche to Paris, the very fact that he was alive, that he could bring a regular army to Paris by forced marches, a solid Republican Army, the Bonapartists would have been less bold, the Directory would have been bolder. With Bonaparte in flight or under arrest, history would have changed. There would have been no Empire, no wars to assure and perpetuate a throne, no artificial alliance with Austria to get an infusion of royal blood into the heir of the dictator.

It's an interesting speculation. Hoche might have done nothing, might have scrammed abroad like Moreau, might have become a Marshal of France and Duke of Something-or-other, or a king, like a couple of others. Yet, somehow, he always has seemed a stronger character

(Continued on page 129)

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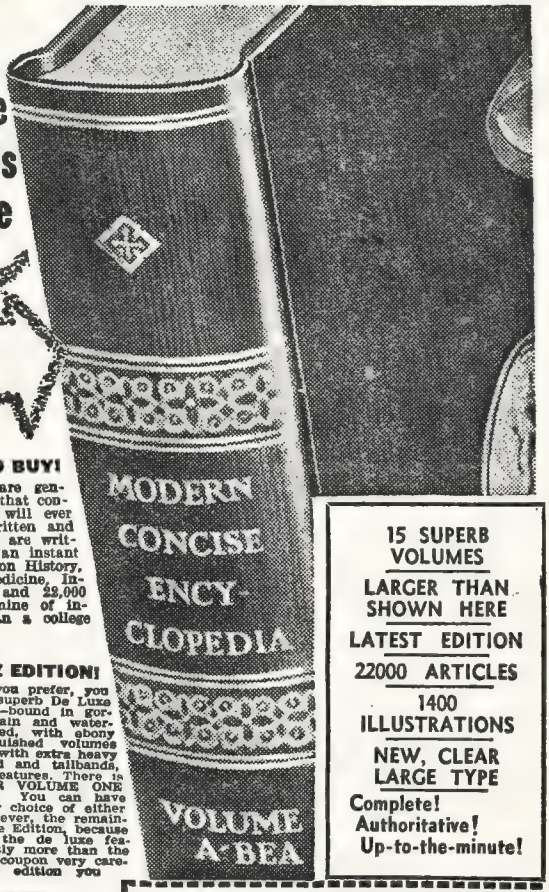

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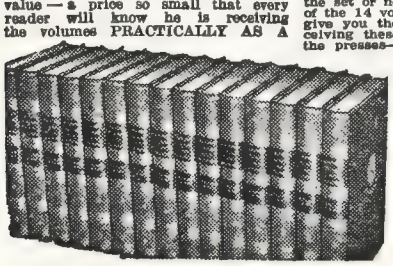

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Editor's Note:—A gentle admonition seems to be in order, directed at a few thoughtless readers who have been deluging A.A. experts lately with questions that they obviously can't answer and wouldn't if they could. We want you to use this department but please don't **abuse** it. For instance—we thought everybody knew the world was at war but apparently the man who wrote an African expert asking for detailed information on how to take up land and "homestead" in Ethiopia is living in some other planet. Then there was the ardent philatelist who wrote the identical letter to all our foreign experts asking for sets of stamps from the country each represented. "Information you can't get elsewhere" reads the subhead at the beginning of the department. Requests, such as one expert got, for a detailed article on "all phases of life, customs, history, natural resources, etc." (it was that "etc." that floored our expert) just don't play fair with our service. Most of what the inquirer wanted could have been had in any encyclopedia but he just didn't bother to look. It was easier to write. Let us repeat—we want you to use *Ask Adventure* but please use a little discretion in so doing.

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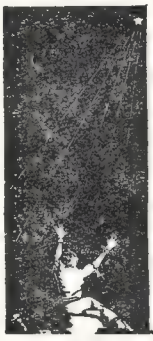

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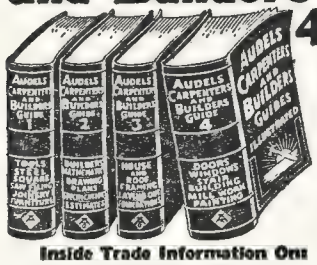

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South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile.*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure*. **2** *Venezuela, The Guianas, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.*—DR. PAUL VANORDEN SHAW, care of *Adventure*.

★**West Indies**—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

Iceland—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Baffinland and Greenland — VICTOR SHAW, 11628¾ Mayfield Av., West Los Angeles, Calif.

Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, Severna Park Md.

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Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 952 No. Hudson ave., Hollywood, Calif.

Western U. S., Part 1 *Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *New Mexico (Indians, etc.)*—H. F. ROBINSON, 1211 W. Roma Ave., Albuquerque, N. M. **4** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nev. **5** *Idaho and environs.*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **6** *Arizona, Utah.*—C. C. ANDERSON, Box 1293, Salt Lake City, Utah. **7** *Texas, Oklahoma.*—J. W. WHITAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S., Part 2 *Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River.*—GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton, P. O., Ingram, Pa. **3** *Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis, Arkansas Bottom.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

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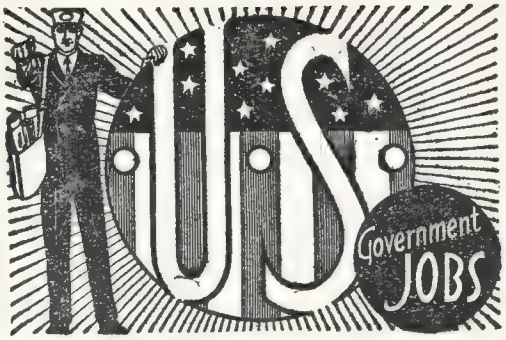

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Frontier Asthma Co. 142-H Frontier Bldg.
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(Continued from page 8)

Would like to hear from any descendants of Dr. Christian Seahousen Friis or Fries. Native of Denmark. Died about twenty years ago. He was my uncle. He lived in Texas somewhere near El Paso. Write T. M. Meyers, c/o ADVENTURE.

Would like to contact some of my old shipmates in regard to getting a claim through for a pension. I served on the U.S. destroyer *Burrows* #29, all through the World War, was based at Queenstown, Ireland and Brest, France. I was ship's cook, 1st class. I am at present in the Veterans' Hospital, Bronx, N. Y., and do not know how long I will be here. My mail address: Charles A. Miller, 847—4 Ave., Allegheny County, Verona, Pa.

Oscar Stalber, gym instructor, last seen in Oakland, early part of 1935. Please write Geier, 1065 Aileen Oakland, Calif., or, F. P. Soen, 144 Congress St., Jersey City, N. J.

Frank J. Molan, formerly of Minneapolis and Cass Lake, Minnesota, a Locomotive Fireman by occupation or probably working as an engineer on some Northwest railroad. He would be about 52 years of age now—height about five feet 11 inches and weight about 170 pounds. Last heard of as having enlisted in the Canadian Forces in 1916. Any information as to his whereabouts will be more than appreciated by his two sisters, and two brothers. Write F. S. Kavanaugh, Box 5176, Memphis, Tenn.

My twin brother, Donald J. Smith, 24 yrs. old, disappeared in August, 1940. He is 5 ft. 11 in. tall, weighs 135 lbs., light brown hair, very crooked teeth, neither drinks nor smokes. Wears glasses constantly. Please get in touch with Pvt. David E. Smith, Co. E., 19th Engineers, Port Ord, Calif.

Have lost track of my brother and sister. Brother, George Schutter, last heard from at North Franklin, Conn., about 1919. Sister, Mary McGrath [illegible] Schutter, last heard from in 1918, lived in Norwich, Conn. If anyone has heard of, or knows either, please write to Fred Schutter, 328 East 38 St., N. Y. C.

I have located my lost brother, sister, thanks to your LOST TRAILS. Thanking you for your kind assistance, Fred Schutter, 328 E. 38 Street, New York.

THE CAMP-FIRE

(Continued from page 122)

than the others, and I think he would have opposed a dictatorship. Anyway, you can't say more for a guy who died before he was thirty than that he *might* have changed the history of the World.

That's a little bit about Hoche. And I'll go back to minding my own business. But that's really nothing—get me started sometime on what would have occurred if General Georges had been placed in command instead of Gamelin in 1939, with dictatorial powers. I spot the Nazis ten thousand planes and six mechanized divisions, drive to the Rhine, pour through the Brenner Pass, etc. It's amazing.

LAST month we noted here in *Camp-Fire* the report that cannon-fire had been heard in the Straits of Magellan. This morning's paper (May 6) carries news of the return of the *North Star,* Admiral Byrd's polar exploration motorship, from Antarctica. On her northward voyage she made port at Punta Arenas bringing news of a German naval repair base on Deception Island, one of a group of islands off Palmerland, south of Cape Horn near the South Shetlands. It is presumed the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* used it as a base in her South Atlantic raids. Things are happening *East of the Williwaw* and south of old Cape Stiff these days and not only in L. T. W.'s serial. Better keep your eyes on that region—it's one of the potential trouble-spots of the world!

OCCASIONALLY we get requests for back numbers of *Adventure* which we are unable to supply—our limited stock of back issues goes back only a short time—and occasionally we get word from some reader who has files of past years available to sell. George C. Miller, 85 Palm St., Rochester, N. Y. and W. R. Hynes, Palm Harbor, Fla. both inform us that they wish to dispose of their old *Adventures.* They have fairly complete files on hand—some bound volumes—dating back to 1919 and 1912 respectively. If your own files are incomplete we suggest you get in touch with these men direct and make an offer—K. S. W.

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THE TRAIL AHEAD

"Wagons Away!" by H. Bedford-Jones begins in our next issue. Aboard those bucking prairie schooners, plowing their Westward course of empire, you'll meet Morgan Wright, New England mill-town man whose heritage of Indian blood drew him, as though it were a magnet, toward Californy's promised land—and One-Eye Potts (his portrait is our September cover), who had spent the best years of his life "takin' fur, killin' buffler, teamin', guidin', huntin', diggin' gold from Independence to Laramie and beyond"—and Frank Barnes, big talker, heavy drinker, whose crew of Nighthawks made the perilous trek an interminable hell for the Argonauts—and Diane, whose store of strong medicine, given her by a Sioux chief, was not nearly as effective in curing the ailments of that gallant band as were her own beauty and courage and loyalty. All these and many more, people this gripping four-part novel of the folk who helped build our America in the snow-rich winter of '52.

Those umpires are here again! W. C. Tuttle returns with "The Come Back of I and Chesty" and that means you're due to run the whole gamut of laughter from the restrained chuckle to the all-out belly-laugh before you finish this hilarious adventure of Lefty Simpson and his partner in trouble, still calling 'em as they see 'em in the "Sundown Leege," where every strike's an error and every hit a howl ball.

Luke Short gives us "Exile," a stirring novelette of Indian fighting in the Navajo country during the Civil War, his first story since "Blood on the Moon;" Hurd Barrett in "The Counterfeiters" proves that the Japanese aren't such a wonderful little people after all—when it comes to flying; Frank W. Ebey tells of "the Defense of Baler Church," one of the most amazing if little known military sieges in history; Leslie T. White brings you face to face with Nazi sea power in the concluding installment of "East of the Williwaw"; plus other gripping shorts and departments you won't find anywhere but in—

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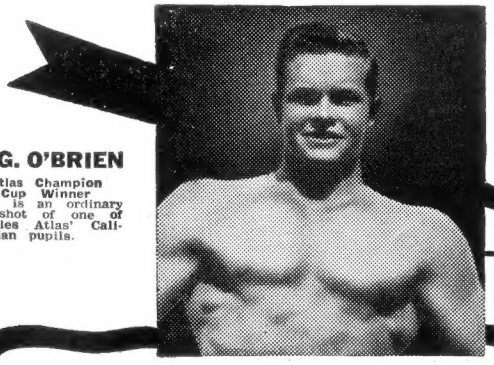

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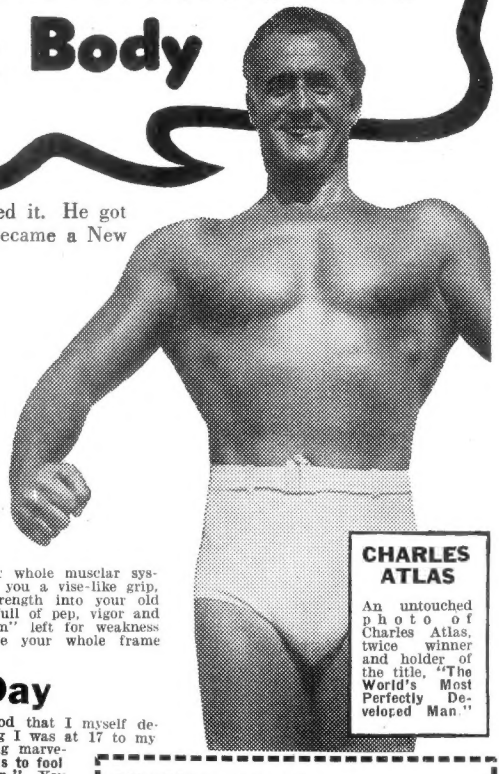

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